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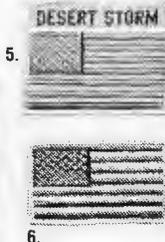
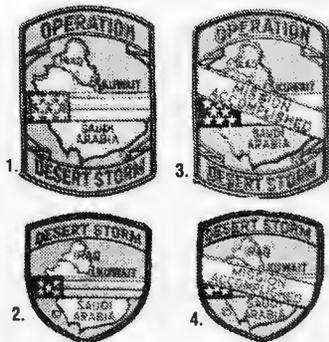
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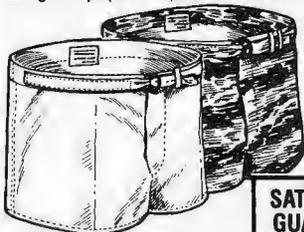


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FEATURES



POWs — Page 46

Photo: Barr/Lalson

BOOMING BIG-BORE BULLPUP Peter G. Kokalis
SOF T&Es AWC Technology's new 7.62x51mm NATO G2 bullpup rifle 26

TO HELL ON A SHINING PATH Peter Noble
Correspondent Peter Noble decided the best way to break into the combat-reporting game was to go find some combat, and Peru has no shortage of that. Here's his front-line story on the elusive Maoist Sendero Luminoso and MRTA terrorist movements 30

IN SEARCH OF MIAs Garry L. Smith
Since September 1988, U.S. military teams have returned to Vietnam to investigate missing-in-action cases from the war. Smith led one of these teams into the infamous Ashau Valley, and this is his story 34

(IN AND) OUT OF ANGOLA John Coleman
After 16 years of civil war, peace has broken out in this southern African country and it appears the good guys won. On instructions from the Publisher — "Get into Jamba and get a photo" — our Managing Editor did just that and came away wondering, "Is it real, or is it Memorex?" 36

CRACK-UP IN CROATIA Mike Williams
Fighting for freedom or just more silly-ass separatists? Correspondent Mike Williams reports from Yugoslavia on the Croatian and Slovenian struggle against army-supported Serbians 40

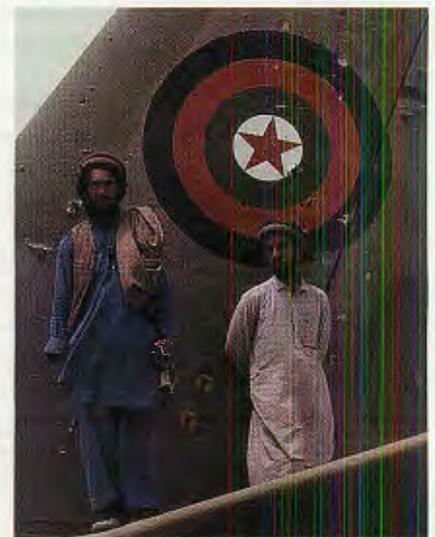
POW/MIA Gerard Calla
From zealots to debunkers, from conspiracists to those who make their living on the bones of dead GIs, everyone has their own POW/MIA agenda. Yet does anyone really want to answer the question: "What happened to our troops missing in Southeast Asia?" A few do — but most don't 46

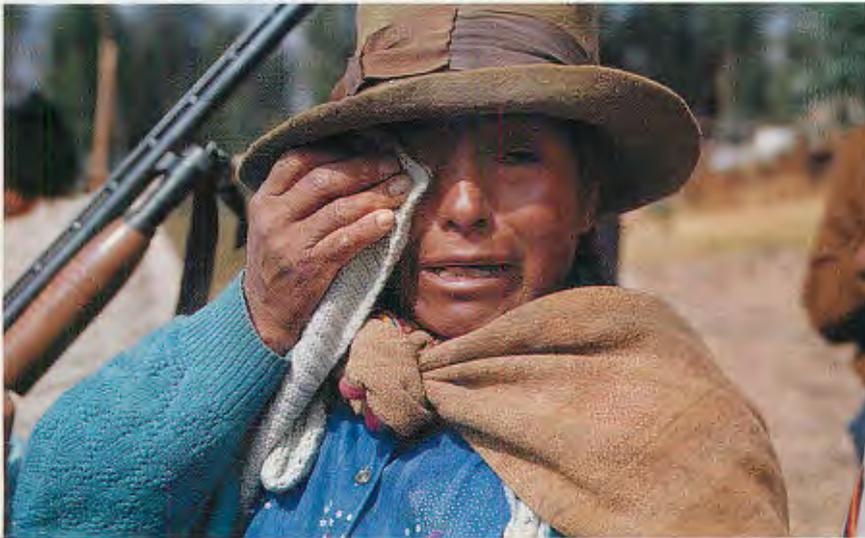
BLOODY, BEAUTIFUL KURDISTAN Peter Douglas
Scattered in the mountains in parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, the Soviet Union and Lebanon, the Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world without their own country. With Saddam Hussein still after them, the Kurds are fighting (and dying) in the mountains of Iraq 52

DOES THE U.S. ARMY HAVE A FEAR OF FIREARMS? . . Robert K. Brown
Why weren't troops guarding Patriot missile sites in Saudi Arabia issued magazines for their weapons? Why weren't troops allowed to carry live ammunition during the war? Were our troops being set up like the Marines in Beirut in 1983? Our intrepid Editor/Publisher saw it all while he was in Saudi, and here's his report 58

KHOST BUSTERS Bruce Richardson
The Soviets are not only in disarray at home, but also beyond their "sacred borders," as in Afghanistan. Mujahideen took advantage of Soviet-style military administration and, after a decisive battle, recaptured their provincial capital of Khost 60

Afghanistan — Page 60 Photo: Bruce Richardson





Peru — Page 30

Photo: Peter Noble

**SPECIAL 8-PAGE BONUS SECTION:
 SOF's WEAPONS CACHING MANUAL**

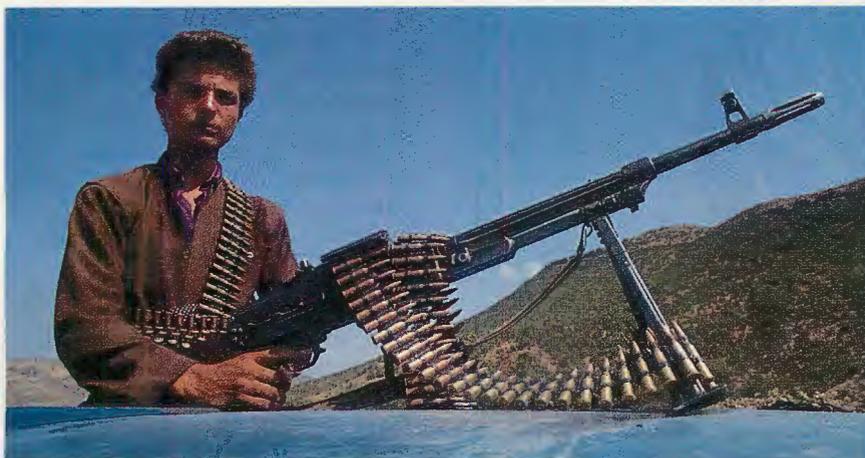
"The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government." — Thomas Jefferson. "Arms in the hands of citizens may be used at individual discretion in private self-defense." — John Adams. "When firearms go, all goes. We need them every hour." — George Washington

No one, then or now, has been more eloquent regarding why "we the people" have the right to keep and bear arms. Yet, in the politically correct 1990s, the fashion is to disarm every law-abiding man and woman in the United States because "government will take care of us." Bullshit. We'll take care of ourselves, thank you, even if federal, state and city governments think otherwise. That's why we're printing this self-help manual on weapons caching — to help you help yourself if Big Brother comes knocking at your door. Remove it and keep it with the Special Forces Caching Manual we printed last month. But keep them in a safe place. We're afraid someday you may need them

89

Kurdistan — Page 52

Photo: Peter Douglas



COLUMNS

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COVER

It started with a rash of bogus photos earlier this year, then suddenly the issue of Prisoners of War/Missing in Action from the Vietnam War was — once again — a hot topic. And that's the problem: it was a "topic," not an issue anyone seemed to want to seriously resolve. Why? All too often, the question of Southeast Asia POW/MIAs has become a political (or economic) agenda for many individuals and groups whose livelihood depends on the question *not* being answered; too many rice bowls and too many "careers" would be broken if it were. This month, we take a close look at those who've made their living off shattered dreams and broken promises, beginning on page 46

BULLETIN BOARD

PLAY IT AGAIN, SADDAM — PLEASE...

The Senate has voted 97-2 to authorize a second U.S. military assault on Iraq, in the event force is needed to encourage Saddam Hussein to comply with the U.N. resolution demanding destruction of Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

The U.N. resolution mandates that all nuclear materials in Iraq suitable for use in bomb

manufacture be placed under international control, and that the Iraqi stockpile of chemical and biological weapons be destroyed under international supervision. Although the U.S.-led Coalition thought the bulk of Saddam's NBC toys had been destroyed during the Gulf War, U.N. inspectors have located large stockpiles that were undamaged, and have yet to uncover stockpiles they believe Saddam has, but will not acknowledge.



Flight of Fantasy ... Ed Del Rosso of Marlboro, New Jersey, is offering three-week coast-to-coast barnstorming flights in a 1943 Stearman and/or a Great Lakes Sports biplane for those who want to get away from — but not too high above — it all. The cost? If you have to ask, you can't go. Contact Del Rosso at (908) 591-0412.

FEDS INDICT SALVADORAN REBEL...

A U.S. federal grand jury has handed down an indictment and arrest warrant for the Salvadoran rebel believed to have murdered Army Lieutenant Colonel David H. Pickett and Private Earnest Dawson after their helicopter was shot down in eastern El Salvador last January. The indictment charges the guerrilla, known only as "Porfirio," with two counts of first-

degree murder and two counts of using a firearm in a violent crime. FMLN rebels admitted last January that their forces killed the two injured men. The true identity of "Porfirio" is not yet known.

WOMEN FIGHTER JOCKS?

Although the Armed Services Committee was opting for a more tentative study approach, the Senate has voted 93-3 to allow women to fly in Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps

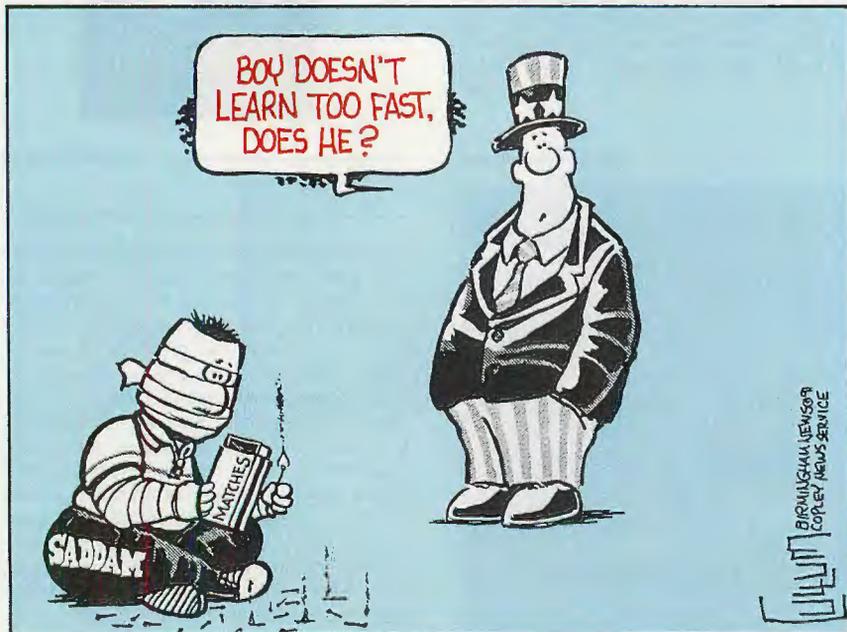
combat aircraft. It is expected that the first combat assignment of women aviators could take place within a year. The individual services will have the option to decide when and where women will be given combat aircraft assignments. Army and Marine Corps officials were quoted as saying they would resist any change in combat assignments even if the law is changed. Army assignment policy is determined by regulation, rather than law. In a unrelated announcement, the Navy advises it has grounded F-16 fighters because of cracks in them. "The Navy believes any cracks are a reason to ground the aircraft," Navy spokesman Lt. Fred Henney said.

SMARTER SPOOKS...

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, hoping tomorrow's intelligence officers will have more intelligence, proposes diverting funds from intelligence agencies to establish a \$180 million fund to improve the education of American students in the international skills needed by tomorrow's spooks and diplomats.

DON'T LEAVE LIBYA WITHOUT IT...

Donations to the African National Congress (ANC) have been a little off lately, so the South African organization has been hitting up old friends, including Libyan semi-strongman



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GET EVEN The Video of Dirty Tricks



When life gets ugly, you have to play dirty. George Hayduke shows you how in outrageous, indescribable ways that have to be seen to be believed. It just doesn't get any dirtier than **The Video of Dirty Tricks**. This video takes up where the **Get Even** books leave off, and it is for *serious* revenge seekers only. Video vengeance is not for the faint of heart or weak of stomach. It contains some of the vilest, sickest, most humiliating – yet effective – tricks ever seen. They cost little or no money and can be executed by – or against – anyone. So if you know some bullies who need to be busted (and this applies to their anatomies and their lives in general), turn all the weapons at your disposal against them. What weapons? Chicken parts, sewage, excrement, roadkill . . . *nothing* is too disgusting! Isn't it time you taught a few people the meaning of R-E-S-P-E-C-T? The **Get Even** video is rated "R" for Revenge and is for *entertainment purposes only*. Videos are nonreturnable. Color, approx. 40 min., VHS only. **\$29.95**



.45 ACP SUPER GUNS Modified .45 Autos for Competition, Hunting, and Personal Defense by J.M. Ramos

The rugged, reliable Colt .45 1911 pistol is the greatest handgun of all time. Here is an exhaustive look at the classic masterpieces, the double-action and full-auto conversions, and the latest high-tech custom guns. Hundreds of beautiful photos. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, photos, illus., 144 pp. **\$20.00**



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ARRIVE ALIVE Tony Scott's Complete Counterambush-Antiterrorist Driving Course

Here's a crash course in recognizing and escaping ambushes on the road before they become unsolvable and deadly emergencies. Action-packed footage shows high-speed turns, braking and ramming. See actual assassinations recreated and analyzed for mistakes and solutions. Color, 58 min., VHS only. **\$59.95**



GET EVEN The Complete Book of Dirty Tricks

A hilarious overview of the methods people use to get even with big business, government and enemies. These dirty tricks range from the simple to the elaborate, including more sophisticated schemes devised by CIA and Mafia members and political dirty tricksters. For *entertainment only*. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, 208 pp. **\$19.95**



SEALS UDT/SEAL Operations in Vietnam by T.L. Basiljevack

The definitive book on U.S. Navy SEALs' role in Vietnam. Accounts of combat missions reveal incredible acts of skill and valor by SEAL troops under fire. Sixteen pages of rare photos show SEALs in training, on patrol in VC territory and moving up canals in the Mekong Delta. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, photos, 272 pp. **\$26.95**



BUSINESS PARTNERS The Best Pistol/Ammunition Combinations for Personal Defense by Peter Alan Kaser

Here is a practical and realistic assessment of which modern bullets work best in which handguns to get the job done in a life-or-death situation. From the truth about wound ballistics to the debate over the most effective calibers, this book holds nothing back. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, photos, illus., 200 pp. **\$22.95**



THE IRAQI ARMY Organization and Tactics

From SCUD missile units to the elite Republican Guard, here's the most up-to-date tactical handbook on every aspect of the Iraqi army recently decimated by U.S.-led coalition forces during Operation Desert Storm. This manual provides valuable insight into the U.S. military's doctrine of quick and violent attack that will shape the face of modern warfare into the next century. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, illus., 192 pp. **\$15.00**



BLACK MEDICINE: THE VIDEO
Vital Targets, Maximum Punishment
A graphic demonstration of how to exploit the vulnerable vital points of the human anatomy. The instructors – bouncers in some of the most violent bars and roadhouses in the country – focus on strikes that *they know from experience* will put a man down. Some of the techniques in this video are only appropriate for life-or-death situations. Therefore, this film is for *information purposes only*. Color, approx. 50 min., VHS only. **\$29.95**



JUST SAY NO TO DRUG TESTS How to Beat the Whiz Quiz by Ed Carson

Urinalysis is a blatant violation of human freedom and dignity, and now you can fight back! Ed Carson, who handled drug testing for a large U.S. military base, reveals how the tests are done and how to beat them. *He did it successfully for eight years* using the exact methods outlined in this book. Find out how to preserve your life-style and keep your job. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, 48 pp. **\$10.00**



OPERATION JUST DESERTS A Guerilla's Guide to Getting Even

When pests, human and nonhuman, upset your life's delicate balance, it doesn't always call for all-out war; sometimes it just requires a little "police action." This arsenal of pestilent pranks will help you turn the tables on your tormentors and effect a glorious liberation: your own. For *entertainment purposes only*. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, 120 pp. **\$14.00**



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Poland, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, and Hungary can now purchase commercial defense-related goods from United States suppliers, subject to proper licensing and export approval, according to the State Department's Office of Defense Trade Policy.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH...

To Peter Kessler of the Bronx, and Ron Hall of Gore Bay, Ontario, for their respective donations to the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund and Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, and to those generous friends who did not want their names printed.

NO AMNESTY FOR WAR SOUVENIRS ...

Contrary to rumors, reports in the press and information given to SOF by Central Command, **NO AMNESTY HAS BEEN ISSUED** by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) to returning Desert Shield/Storm troops who brought illegal Iraqi war souvenirs back with them.

That no amnesty exists has been confirmed for SOF by Jack Killorin, chief of the Public Affairs Branch of the BATF. Although Mr. Killorin said that the goal of the BATF is to retrieve contraband weapons and not prosecute those individuals who voluntarily turn them in, *there are no guarantees* to that effect and anyone turning in a legally contraband Iraqi war souvenir to the BATF *does so at their own risk*.

SOF apologizes for passing on erroneous information in the last issue, which we received in good faith from a Navy Public Affairs Officer at CENTCOM.

We are currently investigating how — and possibly *why* — these rumors of amnesty were started, and if there have been any military personnel prosecuted in the past, based on information military authorities received from the BATF after a contraband weapon was voluntarily turned in.

When trying to discern the *real* facts of government policies and directives, there is no such thing as being too cynical. This is one lesson that will not be lost on SOF, we can assure you. ☒

Moammar Khadafi. Unfortunately, his recent \$1 million donation to the ANC was channeled through American Express, who glommed the money to comply with U.S. sanctions that were imposed on Libya for its backing of international terrorists. Heh, heh, heh.

COLD WAR CASH?...

The Soviet decision to withdraw all old 50- and 100-ruble notes from circulation is posing a problem for Swiss bankers, who are holding large stocks of them.

BUSY BANKERS...

The image of The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) currently under investigation gets blacker and blacker. Senate investigator Jack Blum has uncovered evidence that BCCI helped finance and ship North Korean Scuds to Syria and PRC Silkworm missiles to the Middle East, and handled financing for other Chinese arms sales around the world — as well as helping Pakistani generals skim money and weapons intended for Afghan guerrillas and aiding Jordanian arms sales to Guatemala. Also, as we go to press, accusations are being published of a BCCI role in Afghanistan's poppy fields.

CACHED KALASHNIKOV KARMA...

The DoD has issued a warning to anyone who might have ignored or been unaware of prohibitions on bringing back AKs as Gulf War souvenirs, that wood-stocked AKs have been found booby-trapped with high explosives in the stock, rigged to detonate when fired. Official advice is to contact DoD or the BATF. In the event you have mustered out and no longer have ready access to the DoD, or live in a remote area with no BATF office, you will at least want to have a qualified EOD type check it out, or fire it several times from behind a barricade with a *long* string to the trigger. *Then* you still have to figure how to pull this legal chestnut out of the fire, since importation/possession of an unregistered AK is *verboten*. Advice? There are procedures, *but first contact a lawyer*.

BRIGHT IDEA...

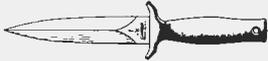
The Army Systems Acquisition Review Council has approved full-scale development of the Stingray laser weapon, with production of 165 weapons for fitting on Bradley IFVs to begin in 1995. In use, the laser will automatically search out and attack any vehicles hidden in front of the Bradley, frying periscopes, TV sensors, and the eyes of the enemy crew.

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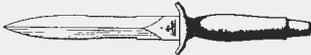
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- 440-A steel
- Blackened aluminum handle
- Cordura sheath w/boot/belt clip



Mark II
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- 6 1/2" double edge, serrated blade
- 440-A steel
- Blackened aluminum handle
- Cordura sheath



Shoulder Harness
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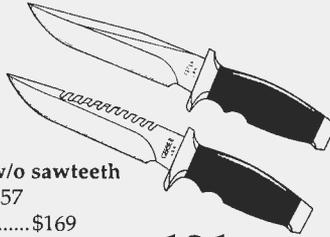
- Lightweight & comfortable!
- Blackie Collins design
- Works w/Guardian & Mark I



Parabellum w/black Nylon sheath
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Your Discount Price \$51.00

Parabellum w/Cordura swivel sheath
#GB7028
Retail\$100
Your Discount Price \$60.00

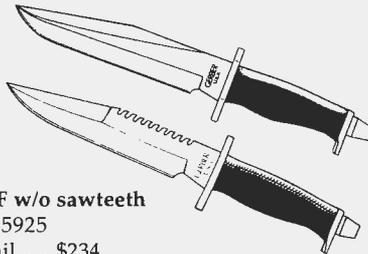
- 4 1/4" blade
- 440-A steel
- Super positive Bolt-Action Lock



LMF w/o sawteeth
#GB5957
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Your Discount Price \$101.40

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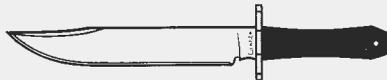
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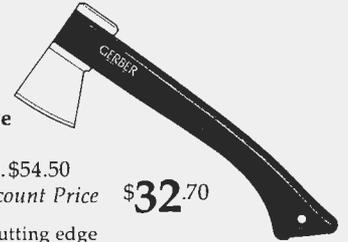
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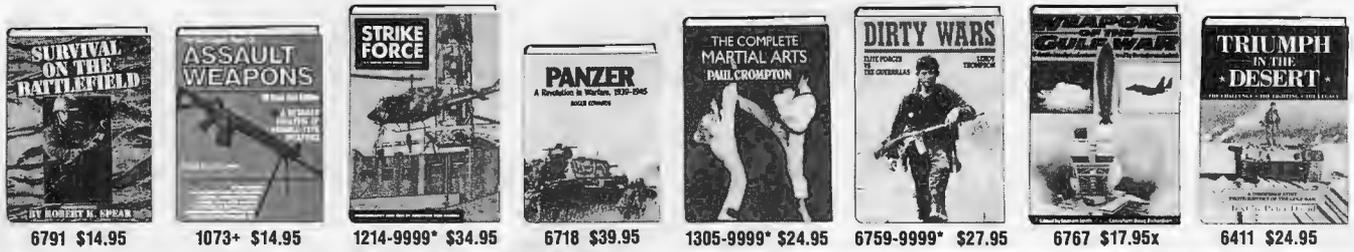
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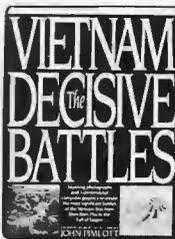


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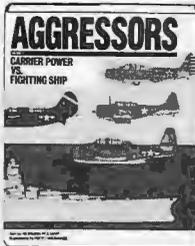
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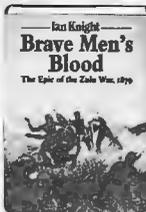
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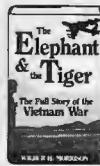
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SOF 11/91

BRUTALITY GRATUITY ...

Thanks for the article "Brutality Reality" in your September '91 issue. It was an excellent perspective that even opened my eyes (I have been a city police officer for nearly a decade).

I've been put in the hospital on three different occasions, not including the times I've been bandaged up after being assaulted. My nose has been broken, my finger nearly bitten off, and I've been sniped at. And there have been numerous other encounters involving everything from handguns to sharpened pieces of glass.

I appreciate your magazine taking a look at police brutality from our point of view.

Richard Baughn
Austin, Texas

BRUTALITY DUBIETY ...

I am writing in regard to your article titled "Brutality Reality." When a civilian hits a police officer, it's assault; when a police officer hits a civilian, it's use of force — is that what you're trying to tell me in this article?

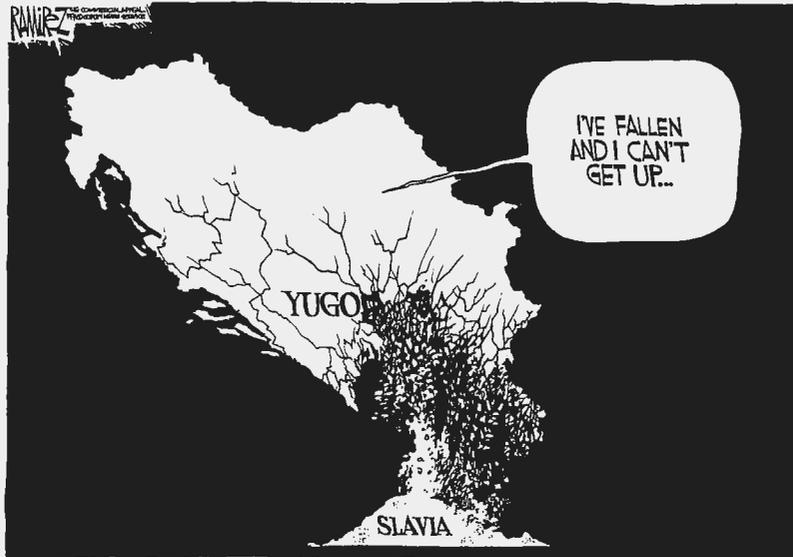
If it is, then I'd better become a police officer, so I can kick ass and call it "use of force." No matter what it's called, it's still assault, which is a crime in the USA.

Derek Twyman
Jackson, North Carolina

FLAK IN THE GROIN ...

About the story in your July '91 issue, "SAS Dares In The Gulf," I have never read such a pathetically fabricated story in my life. It was tripe. As I am an ex-rupert of the regiment, let me enlighten you.

Members of the SAS do not talk to reporters, and they do not — unlike our poor man's counterparts in America — seek publicity. You will not discover/uncover that which we have done until approximately 10 years after we've done it (unless, of course, you happen to be an adversary). Any serving member of the SAS who talked



to the media would be RTU'd — and believe me, that would be a fate worse than death to us.

So please leave us out of your fantasy world; we prefer the shadows to the limelight.

F. Bowie
Honolulu, Hawaii

FLAK ON THE BACK ...

I found the article "Party Crashing in Krakow" in your August '91 issue to be right on target. I had the honor of earning Polish and Soviet wings in Poland on a tour there during June 1991. Originally, we were just going to jump with the Polish Airborne, but to my surprise, we were able to earn Soviet wings, too. The professionalism and spirit of the Polish paratroopers was 110%, just as you said.

SOF has once again proven that it is accurate, on target, and in a class all its own. Fortunately, I was able to experience the things SOF printed, and could very much relate to your reporting. Keep up the good work, and keep telling it like it is.

Walter Noonan
Cincinnati, Ohio

LAWS "R" U.S. ...

I am compelled by conscience and by our Constitution to remind those readers of SOF who are in the military and the police that they are sworn to "uphold and defend the Constitution from all enemies both foreign and domestic; and to obey the *lawful* commands of (their) superiors." I took that oath 17 years ago, and am still bound by it.

I am grieved and angry over what is going on in our government. We are being compelled to choose between what the new laws demand, and what is clearly set forth in the Constitution.

Therefore, I say to those in the military and the police, who are sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution before all else: If you enforce laws which violate the Bill of Rights in our Constitu-

tion, you are in violation of your oath of office.

Your loyalty belongs to the Constitution — not to the president, not to the Congress, not to the courts, not to local and state politicians. When unconstitutional laws are passed, they should be neither enforced nor obeyed. The people who pass such laws should be voted the hell out of office; and remember, next year is an election year.

Stephen G. Rodenbough
Denver, Colorado

Approximately 18,000 new laws, constitutional or not, are passed each and every year in the United States by federal, state and local lawmakers; very few laws are ever removed from the books.

AMENDMENT ROULETTE ...

Since "the pen is mightier than the sword," why not "press control" as well as "gun control"? The first phase of press control would be a strict, "enlightened" licensing program. Now, who could object to harmless government licensing? Drivers are licensed, aren't they? Why not journalists?

Next, a seven-day "waiting period" should be made mandatory prior to every publication or broadcast. This would allow government agents time to conduct background checks on journalists to ensure they weren't mentally ill, had no criminal records, were licensed, and their articles had been government-approved. Then, we would need "safe journalism" government-supervised training schools and registration of printing equipment, es-

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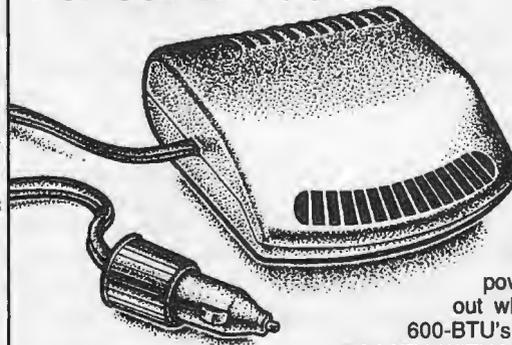
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pecially if it looked dangerous.

Now here's the inspirational part: Press control wouldn't necessitate changing a single word of the Constitution; the courts would merely have to "redefine" its meaning to "eradicate" 200 years of "shameless, ignorant misinterpretation."

Of course, if this were done, the Constitution would be permanently subverted and personal freedom dead, but aren't those small prices to pay for the added "safety" of government control?

"Gun control" and "press control" are direct parallels. Both are equally forbidden by the Constitution and for precisely the same reason: the government with the power to control the press and the guns has the power to enslave its people.

Robert Flesh
Philipsburg, Montana

Government agents? Background checks? Licenses? "Safe" journalism? Soldier of Fortune wouldn't last overnight (which, no doubt, would be just fine with the "enlightened" ones).

VIVA P.R. ...

I was happily surprised by the cover photo on your June '91 issue. On it appears an MP from the Puerto Rico Army National Guard. In the upper right-hand corner of the photo, you can see a small Puerto Rican flag. As a Vietnam War vet, I feel proud that once again Puerto Ricans were fighting for freedom alongside their fellow citizens from the United States.

Colonel Jose A. M. Nolla
Adjutant General of
Puerto Rico

NO FAITH IN "PUPPET MASTERS" ...

After reading your article on



Colonel Peck in the August '91 issue of SOF, I must admit that I, too, have reached a serious level of frustration regarding POW/MIAs.

I was not old enough to have served in Vietnam, but did serve for four years, nine months in the Republic of Korea, and therefore have some very limited idea of what it must be like for any serviceman to be held against his will far from home. As of now, I have more than 18 years of service in the Regular Army and the Army National Guard.

Personally, I doubt Col. Peck needed as much as one year to determine the lay of the land and realize he was down range and well into the impact area. In the land of lawyers and politicians (read storytellers and liars), there probably was little else he could do but resign.

I can only pray that I am never

we stopped a mere 55 miles southwest of Basra.

I have noticed since returning to Germany that the media has given much credit to the M-1 Abrams and her crew of four. I have yet to hear of a story about a "mechanized grunt."

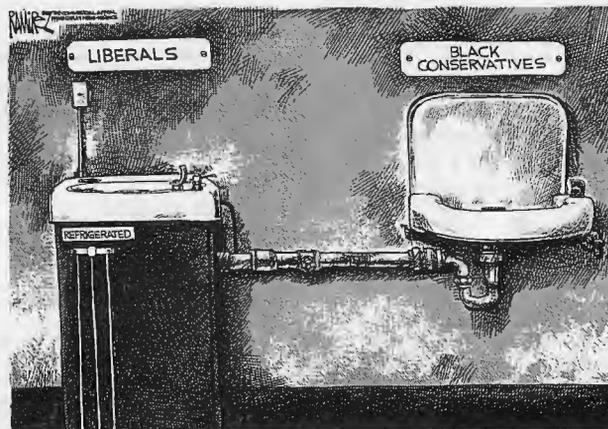
While the tankers did prove their worth, they thought they were invulnerable and acted like children playing a video game. The tankers fired at one another, my unit's mechanics, our engineers, and, unfortunately, our scouts, which resulted in the death of one and four wounded.

Granted, my father spent a year-long tour in Vietnam and I fought only for four days, but believe me, those four days in the Gulf could have been just as lethal as 365 days somewhere else. We were involved in a three-hour-long firefight after sweeping a battlefield; also, we ran right into Iraqis who had not heard of the cease-fire after it was called. Several thousand rounds were exchanged.

Keep up the good work, SOF, and please remember us grunts.

Christopher White
4th Battalion, 7th Infantry
Aschaffenburg, Germany

Something on your mind? Write and tell us about it. We reserve the right to edit for content or brevity. Send letters to: FLAK, c/o SOF, PO Box 693, Boulder CO 80306



For those who served, those who sacrificed.



Tankard shown approximately actual size of 6 1/4" high. Sculpture © F.E. Hart and V.V.M.F. 1984.

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ets and weapons captured in amazing detail. A second panel depicts the American Bald Eagle—the bold symbol of our nation's strength and pride. And on a third panel, a moving passage from the Veterans Memorial Wall itself—inscribed with the words that have become sacred to grateful and proud Americans everywhere. Even the handle of the tankard is sculpted with a Bald Eagle Head.

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WORLD SITREP

3
CAMBODIA
Prince Norodom Sihanouk picked by rival factions to lead nation toward resolution of civil war; Sihanouk resigns as leader of non-communist resistance.

4
CHILE
Government arrests six top leaders of Laurus Front rebels, effectively dismembering organization (for a while).

5
EL SALVADOR
Scattered fighting, kidnappings, assassinations continue, especially in northern region.

6
ETHIOPIA
Interim President Zenawi promises to cut army from 500,000 to 60,000; 50,000 troops of former government who took refuge in Sudan being flown home by Red Cross.

7
GERMANY
Will continue the draft and continue to use inherited MiG-29 fighters as long as spare parts hold out.

8
HAITI
Jury convicts former Interior Minister Roger Lafontant of leading a coup attempt last January; gives him life sentence at hard labor ... Attempted coup by naval officers failed when sailors refused to obey orders.

9
IRAN
Brigadier General Mansour Sattari, air force CO, visits Moscow to talk a deal for Su-24 Fencers and more MiG-29 Fulcrums to match the ones so graciously supplied by Iraqi pilots.

10
IRAQ
UN weapons specialists state Saddam has four times the chemical weapons he earlier acknowledged, five times the stockpile of supplies to make them ... Government calls for talks with Iran over fate of 60,000 missing Iraqi troops from Iran-Iraq War.

2
BURMA
Embargoed by European Community for arms sales because military regime has not let elected officials take office. Chinese, however, just cut \$1 billion deal with Burmese officials. (Now is definitely not the time to be a Burmese freedom fighter.)

1
AFGHANISTAN
Red Cross suspends operations in Herat, citing risks to personnel ... U.S. bars citizens from entering as relief workers after Shi'ite group kidnaps two ... U.N. pulls officials from Faisabad as fighting reaches outskirts of city ... Heavy fighting continues around Kabul.



11
ISRAEL
Reviewing surprise offer from Soviets to sell Tel Aviv SA-10 Grumble SAMs, which Soviets claim are superior to U.S. Patriot systems.

14
KUWAIT
Twenty American GIs injured when ammo truck catches fire, setting fire to ammo dump at Doha.

12
IVORY COAST
Coup attempt foiled with arrest of antigovernment soldiers.

15
LEBANON
PLO guerrillas in southern Lebanon agree to surrender heavy weapons to Lebanese army after President Hrawi deployed more than 10,000 troops (one-fourth of army) to the south.

13
JORDAN
Government security services destroy antigovernment terrorist group calling itself "Militants in God's Service."

29

YUGOSLAVIA

Federal fighter planes bomb Croatian village of Kostajnica, hitting school and clinic ... Serbs, Croatians blaming each other for breakdown of peace efforts by European Community, other doves ... Economic loss to Croatia is already one-fourth of a year's GNP ... Croatia accepts peace plan from federal government, pledging not to be first to break it.

28

USSR

Tragicomic Vodka Putsch by Communist hardliners swiftly fails; democratic forces in USSR consolidate power; Gorbachev resigns from Communist Party; Baltic states make break for freedom; Soviet Union disintegrates and some republics form new alliances; post-coup purge in Kremlin; poor grain harvest expected.

27

UNITED KINGDOM

Former security guard at VSEL shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness jailed for attempting to sell anechoic stealth tile from Trident submarine to Soviets for \$3.2 million.

26

UGANDA

Government claims all rebels have been wiped out, has ceased military operations in north.

25

TURKEY

Allowing U.S.-led Coalition to set up rapid deployment force in southern Turkey along frontier with Iraq; will also contribute 1,000 Turkish troops to this force.

24

SRI LANKA

State news agency reports approximately 450 Tamil rebels killed in week-long battle in north.

23

SOMALIA

Warring factions agree on a permanent cease-fire.

22

SAUDI ARABIA

Gives Turkey \$1 billion worth of crude oil to help fund production/purchase of U.S. F-16 fighters.

21

PHILIPPINES

Police capture chief of the New People's Army and his wife as they were visiting a Manila hospital ... American, Filipino negotiators hammer out deal for USAF to vacate what's left of Clark AFB; USN to continue on at Subic Bay for another 10 years.

20

PERU

In coordinated attacks, Shining Path guerrillas blow up enough power pylons to temporarily knock out electrical power to 90% of the country.

18

NICARAGUA

Former contra rebels (recontras) armed with rifles, mortars and rockets attack and briefly take town of Quilali, 180 miles north of Managua, before being run off - two police, two contras killed; six police wounded.

19

PAKISTAN

Prime Minister Sharif threatens to go to war with any country that attacks Pakistani nuclear facilities, or allows its soil or space to be used to facilitate such an attack.

16

LIBYA

Threatens to attack Spain or Italy if U.S. launches a strike against Libya from their territory; Khadafi warns Libyans to prepare for another strike from the U.S.

17

MADAGASCAR

State of emergency declared as antigovernment protesters and soldiers clash in capital city of Antananarivo.



BATTLE BLADES

SOG Steel

Text & Photo by Greg Walker

The need for a non-attribution combat knife by Special Operations Group (SOG) was recognized once Special Forces (SF) operators realized the issue "Ka-Bar" did not fit requirements necessary for SOG cross-border operations. Equipment for various covert projects were primarily non-standard in nature, allowing Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) to deny U.S. involvement in politically denied theaters of the war in South-east Asia.

The task of designing, testing and supplying a viable combat blade to SOG was handed over to the United States Army's Counter-Insurgency Support Office (USA-CISO). CISO, a highly classified logistical support activity, had assumed responsibility for the support of SF operations in South-east Asia from the CIA in 1963.

CISO was assigned "Project Code PIR," the highest logistics priority available for the supply of both overt and covert items from all services to U.S. SpecOps projects. Simply put, CISO could get things SOG needed, and SOG needed a sterile combat knife.

The deputy director of CISO, Conrad "Ben" Baker, assumed responsibility for the combat knife's design. Relying on input from SOG operators, his own experience and inclinations, and hours of hands-on experimentation, Baker developed several prototypes.

The old story that the SOG design was based on the Randall #1 is dismissed by Baker, whose only influence came from his 1920s-era Marbles hunting knife. Baker also scoffs at the current reference to the knife as a "SOG Bowie" or "CIA knife." "They were neither patterned after the Bowie knife nor manufactured for or issued by the CIA," Baker says.

SOG's original requirement was for a 7-inch knife which would be issued to those teams conducting cross-border combat operations. Baker's final design featured a clip-point blade pattern with a sharpened primary and false edge.



An original 5th Group knife with appropriately stamped crest and wording on the blade. Pommel and guard are blued steel rather than brass — features which are found on CISO/SOG knives.

The steel used was known as SKS-3 and the blade stock was 3/16 of an inch. The "SOG Recon" — as the first knives were called — possessed a blued blade whereas later knives were delivered with a rich plum coloring brought about by the manufacturing process. Handles were "leather washer" in nature; guards and pommels were made from brass. Some variation in guard/pommel materials was seen as more knives were ordered through CISO.

The handle's design utilized four shallow finger grooves, the foremost bringing the index finger up against the lower guard. Baker, who tested his blade's capability to penetrate, cut and slash on pigs, found this allowed the user the greatest control over the knife, particularly when withdrawing it from muscle and flesh. "You slipped your finger over the lower guard and choked up on the knife," he recalls. "This gave you much more leverage to tug that thing out, which is damned hard if you've never done it before."

Scabbards were constructed from leather — most dyed black although a brown sheath was delivered to the Navy for 39 special order knives. There was a riveted and sewn stone pouch present on the face of each sheath; a two-grit sharpening stone was standard issue.

The single retaining strap was positioned so the cutting edge would not come in contact with the strap during withdrawal, an innovation developed by Baker through trial and error. A

black leather wrist thong, threaded through the thong hole bored in the upper rearmost part of the pommel, completes the unit.

The entire knife is assembled via a threaded tang and brass pommel nut. Workmanship on an original CISO/SOG knife is superb in fit and finish, as evidenced by an unissued and documented sample in my collection.

After the "SOG Recon" model entered the system, further shipments were ordered, these featuring the

more utilitarian 6-inch plum-colored blade. Some of these models were issued to standard SF units in-country, as well as to SOG.

The 5th Special Forces Group approached Baker for a design, which he supplied, although the knives were paid for from local, not CISO, funds. These became known as the 5th Special Forces Group Presentation Knives, which were carried in the field as well as salted away in their owners' war chests. These were etched/engraved in a number of ways, the SF unit crest stamped into the blade in most cases. Sources in Japan, where they were manufactured, say that just more than 5,000 of such knives were produced for the 5th.

Twenty-eight years later, Baker's designs continue to hold sway over a large following of collectors. SOG Specialty Knives introduced a Lloyd Hale-inspired interpretation of the 5th Group knife which has enjoyed stunning commercial success. Ek Commando Knives offered a limited edition SOG replica which was quite true to the original specifications and pattern.

Currently, Al Mar Knives has reached an agreement with Baker to produce a collection of SOG/SF designs, which Baker is responsible for. These include the "Recon," a Navy SEAL/UDT variation, and the hard-to-find SF bolo. "We'll be presenting these knives just as they were conceived by Baker," Mar states.

Was the issue CISO/SOG knife a

Continued on page 69

When they ban
your semiautos,
your hunting,
your handguns,
your ammunition,
and your magazines,
you'll ask,

*“Where was
the NRA?”*

In a conspiracy of silence, the anti-gun media have refused to tell you the truth about an avalanche of extremist anti-gun bills now before the U.S. Congress. They know honest coverage would only provoke you to stand up and oppose them.

That's why the National Rifle Association is alerting all gun owners to this gun ban agenda and to what's at stake: If you don't care enough to fight for your gun rights, prepare to lose them.

The NRA has fought long and hard on behalf of 65 million honest American gun owners. Now you must join forces with us to defeat these radical anti-gun threats. Without a united fight, many could well become law by year's end. Then it will be too late to ask, "Where was the NRA?"

Where were you?

Did you know semiauto gun bans in some states have put gun owners at risk of arrest and prosecution for refusing to register, surrender or otherwise dispose of their guns?

Now a similar nationwide ban has passed the U.S. Senate. This is the media-made hoax foisted upon honest gun owners that defines millions of semi-automatic firearms as tools of criminals.

If you own any semiauto on the expandable gun ban list, you could be one of millions of Americans slated to become criminals overnight.

YOUR SEMIAUTOS

When U.S. Sen. Joe Biden's semiauto ban gets you arrested for not "registering" your semiautomatic rifle, shotgun, or handgun, you'll ask, "*Where was the NRA?*"

And we'll ask, "*Where were you?*"



Chances are you spend more on a carrying case to protect your gun, than to protect your right to own your gun.

YOUR MAGAZINES

When U.S. Rep. Bill Hughes bans firearms and magazines because a government bureaucrat says they're "not suitable for sporting purposes," you'll ask, **"Where was the NRA?"**

And we'll ask, **"Where were you?"**

The Hughes bill would give the government power to add virtually any "non-sporting" semiauto to the gun ban list. Magazines would have to be engraved with a serial number and registered. Even pins, springs and miscellaneous parts could be contraband. Their arbitrary "sporting" test is nothing but a blank check for the gun-ban-wagon.



YOUR HUNTING

When public land closings and discharge limits make you drive 500 miles just to hunt, you'll ask, **"Where was the NRA?"**

And we'll ask, **"Where were you?"**

They're not just outlawing your hunting guns, they're outlawing places to use them. Anti-gun and anti-hunting extremists have joined forces to stop you from enjoying one of America's greatest traditions.



YOUR PRIVACY

When federal agents raid your home after finding your name in the National Gun Owner Registry, you'll ask, **"Where was the NRA?"**

And we'll ask, **"Where were you?"**

American gun owners must wake up before our ultimate nightmare comes true. U.S. Rep. Charles Schumer's proposed massive national system of central, computerized gun registration is rapidly taking shape. That means your name, your address and the make, model and serial number of each gun you buy ... all at the government's fingertips.

YOUR AMMUNITION

When you're jailed or fined for possessing *any* type of 9mm, .32 or .25 caliber ammunition, you'll ask, **"Where was the NRA?"**

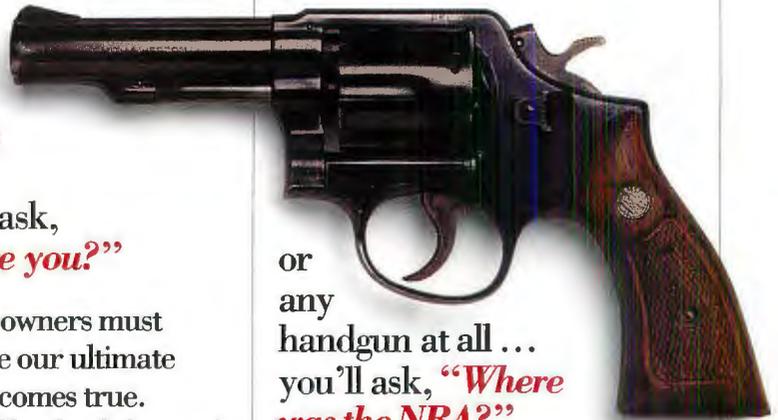
And we'll ask, **"Where were you?"**

U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's ammunition ban bill is proof of his stated ambition to eventually outlaw all handgun ammunition.



YOUR HANDGUNS

When you cannot legally purchase the handgun of your choice ...



or any handgun at all ... you'll ask, **"Where was the NRA?"**

And we'll ask, **"Where were you?"**

Whether it's an arbitrary ban list as in Maryland or a total ban as in Washington D.C., U.S. Rep. Larry Smith's proposed national ban is the first step toward ending handgun ownership.

Contrary to media-made myths, there is no evidence any of these schemes will affect violent criminals. Only honest gun owners like you.

You don't have to agree with the NRA on everything, but ...

We must agree:
Second Amendment
freedoms will not
exist for you or
your children unless
you act now.

For less than
a spincast reel,
a tank of gas or a
few boxes of shells,
you can help protect
your firearm
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MasterCard handy to
charge your member-
ship, or we can bill you
later.

Your NRA Annual Membership Includes:

- Effective defense of your Second Amendment rights at federal, state and local levels
- Strong support for tough crime-fighting measures at federal, state and local levels
- 12 issues of either the AMERICAN RIFLEMAN or AMERICAN HUNTER magazines
- Special member-only insurance benefits
- Special discounts on car rentals and other services

Only the NRA offers you the strength to defeat the gun ban agenda, plus great membership benefits for joining the fight.

But most importantly, you'll know you're defending your Second Amendment rights through the one group lawmakers listen to: The National Rifle Association.

If honest gun owners like you don't answer this call to action, and the constitutional right to own the firearm of your choice is gone forever, your children won't ask, "*Where was the NRA?*"

They'll ask, "*Where were you?*"

Join Now! NRA INSTANT MEMBER HOTLINE:

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- 5) Very affordable room rates.

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These will go fast, so make your reservations early. For this special rate, mention that you are an SOF Conventioneer.

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Plan now to attend for the best rates on rooms and airfares. Register before Jan. 31, 1992, for the special price of \$100. (After this date, \$125.) Don't delay. Register today! (Include T-shirt size for your FREE Convention T-shirt).

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(303) 449-3750

I WAS THERE

Moons Over Guantanamo Bay

by Geo Hook

Illustration by Ralph Butler

The U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, had one of the most unusual rifle ranges I have ever fired on. In plain sight of the range was "the fence."

Twelve-feet high and surrounding the entire base perimeter, the fence was the first line of defense against attack from the communist side. A fire-zone, or "No-Man's Land," had been cut back about 50 yards on either side, with a dirt road connecting the intermittent guard towers. Back from the road was a minefield, and just beyond the mines was the rifle range.

The range was located on the eastern side of the bay, and from it one could look across into communist Cuba, and occasionally glimpse a Cuban sentry. But the most unusual feature about "Gitmo's" rifle range was the 500-yard line, which sat atop a cliff amid a bunker complex so that shooters were not only firing over distance, but down at the same time.

I was a member of Marine Detachment *USS Wasp*, and we'd come to this unusual rifle range in the midst of a tropical paradise, surrounded by a hostile "enemy," for our annual rifle qualification in the spring of 1964.

The *USS Wasp* was on a Caribbean "shake-down" cruise after having undergone an extensive overhaul, and Guantanamo Bay was to be an extended port of call for the ship's company.

We were firing in two series that day. I was firing with the first series, which began on the 200-yard line, then moved to the 300, and then made the climb up the cliff to the 500-yard line high above. The view was fantastic. From there you could see everything along the fence, and the expanse of jungle beyond.

It was nearly 1000 hours when we reached the 500-yard line, but already the tropical heat was caking the sweat



from our bodies into layers of salt on our green, cotton uniforms. I had done very well on the 200- and 300-yard line, but I wasn't doing too well on the 500, having drawn "Maggie's drawers" on each shot fired from the first clip of my M1 rifle. I couldn't believe it, and knew something was wrong.

The "gunny" and the captain were engaged in heated conversation about what had "happened" to me. First, the gunny dressed me down for embarrassing him in front of the CO; then the captain dressed me down and reminded me that the reputation of the detachment was at stake. I tried to assure them that something was wrong with the rifle, not me, but they wouldn't hear of it.

The CO was convinced I was throwing my shoulder in anticipation of the recoil, so he took my rifle, loaded it, and had me fire one round. When I pulled the trigger, there was just a metallic "click" (he had not, in fact, loaded it), and I didn't flinch. So the gunny called for an armorer, who, after examining the rifle, determined that the

rear sight had come loose and would not stay in position while shooting.

I was given another rifle, but by the time I sighted it in, the series had finished shooting. I was told to stay there on the 500-yard line, and to shoot with the second series when they came up. I waited there, alone, while the second series fired. I decided to relax by reconing the bunker complex, built at the height of the Cuban missile crisis, only a couple of years before. It was in one of the bunkers that I found a pair of binoculars.

So there I was, overlooking the rifle range, binoculars in hand, surveying the view before me. I scanned the fence, the guard towers, down to the minefield, back toward the bay, out to the ocean, over the jungle, and down to a ... beach umbrella?

Yes, a beach umbrella! A big red, white, blue, green, and yellow beach umbrella that stood out like a sore thumb in that sea of green. Why I hadn't noticed it before, I'll never know. And, sitting beneath it, as if he were on Miami Beach, was a real-life, in-the-flesh, Reuben-the-Cuban "enemy" sentry. Furthermore, he had binoculars, and was looking up, directly at me.

I couldn't believe it. I was looking at him; he was looking at me. And then, the bastard gave me the finger. I, of course, returned the obscenity. Then, he motioned toward his rifle, pointed his finger in my direction, and I clearly made out the word "bang" on his lips. The "enemy" wanted to shoot my ass! I thought about sending a couple of rounds in his direction when the series below began firing again, but, not wanting to start an international incident, decided against that course of action.

Instead, I decided to do the next best thing: Climbing atop the bunker's sandbags, I dropped my trousers and shot that SOB a "moon" for all the

Continued on page 68

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COMBAT CRAFT

by Chuck Fremont

Water In The Way

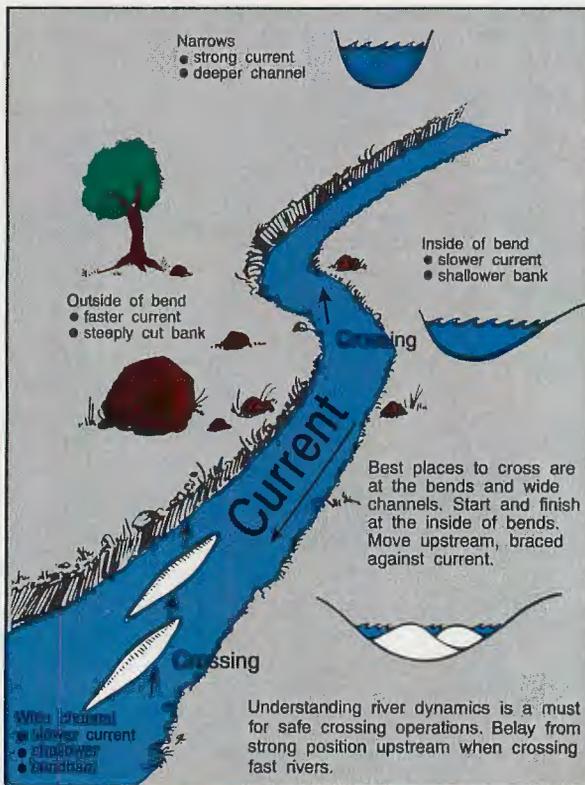
Steep-sided canyon walls and white water rivers are tough obstacles to cross-country movement, but they are not the barriers that they are often made out to be. A person who understands the dynamics of river flow and the general characteristics of canyons and river banks is well on his way to dealing efficiently with even difficult crossings.

River flow, in terms of volume per second, stays fairly constant in the short term. Actual water speed can vary drastically in a short distance, though. If a channel narrows suddenly, the water speed will have to increase since the same volume is being carried.

Such a channel is probably not a good place to cross, though it might be a good place for a rope bridge because of the shorter distance to span. In general, channels widen and slope more gently as one moves downstream. However, tributary streams will increase river flow downstream, and you'll have further to swim or wade. Channel bottoms tend to be silty or muddy in slow-moving rivers, and rocky in rapid streams, though rocks generally will be smoothly rounded.

Water speed also varies around bends. Since water at the outside of a bend has a greater distance to travel than that at the inside, actual water speed will be greatest there and slowest inside. This phenomenon affects the contour of a channel and the shape of banks. The rapid flow at the outside of a bend will, over time, cut deeply into a channel bed, resulting in a steep-sided bank. This is usually not a good place to try to climb out of a river. On the other hand, the slower flow at the inside of a bend results in a gently sloping bank and even the building up of a beach strand.

In a river with many turns, plan your crossing to both begin and end at the inside of bends. You'll be moving downstream as you cross if you're swimming, though it's usually safer to move upstream if you're wading. If there are fewer bends, it's usually best to begin at a straight stretch and try to



emerge at the inside of a bend.

There are a couple of reasons for this. First, you will be fresher at the start than at the end, so it makes sense to emerge at an easier point. Second, if you're alone or are the first across in a team, you can scout the starting point — probing with a stick, feeling your way in, and backing out if necessary. But you're choosing the end point from a distance, so you want to look for the most likely safe exit.

Rapids can look much more intimidating than they really are — lots of white water churning over invisible boulders and the uncertain nature of the stream bed are certainly reason for caution. But unless you're facing a truly great river flowing through a steep and narrow gorge, such as the Colorado in the Grand Canyon, you're likely to find a good crossing in even strong white water.

Look for a stretch with boulders at least partially exposed — the more the better. You want to wade white water, so you need a shallow stretch, and lots of rocks are a good indicator of shallowness. Again, try to plan a crossing that begins and ends on the inside of bends.

Plan the crossing so that you'll be moving generally on an upstream diag-

onal; it's much more stable to push against the current. You'll be leaning into the current, and this reduces the chance of being knocked over. If there are enough rocks, use your hands like a climber; try to always be in three-point contact — either two feet stationary on the stream bed and one hand steady on a rock while the other reaches, or two hands on rocks while a foot searches for a hold. Running shoes or wetsuit booties generally give a better hold on slick river rock than hard-soled combat and jungle boots.

If you're carrying a heavy pack, you have a couple of options. It's dangerous to carry much of a load due to the loss in balance and the difficulty of recovery if you should fall. Ideally, you'll cross first, towing a light line, and then pull the pack across. Usually 550 parachute cord is adequate for this — though you'll want gloves when you haul it in — unless a lot of rough rocks are involved, in which case you may want to have a heavier line tied to the pack. You'll still cross with only the parachute cord attached, pulling the heavier line across once you're on the opposite bank, followed by the pack.

You'll probably want to waterproof the pack, either by wrapping it tightly in two ponchos or by packing the contents in waterproof bags. A pack or rucksack waterproofed in this manner will support the weight of a man and is called a "poncho raft" when so employed. It's an excellent technique to use when swimming a river; the swimmer holds the pack beneath his chest and crosses with a strong flutter kick.

If you're moving with a team, you can rig a line, and ferry everyone's pack across the river. You'll need a carabiner ("snap-link" in Army talk) and a towline of parachute cord twice as long as the ferry line. The ferry line, if stout enough, can be used as a handhold and safety line by the others. If you have a climbing rope and good anchor points are available, you may wish to construct a one-rope bridge, which will allow those behind you to cross hand-over-hand or by a "com-mando crawl." Don't try this unless you

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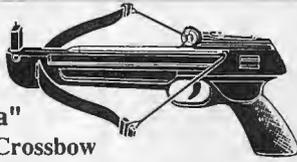
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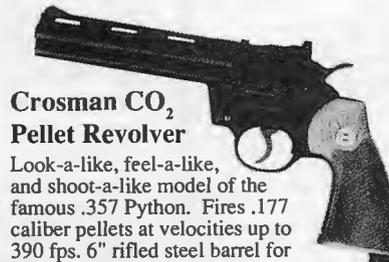
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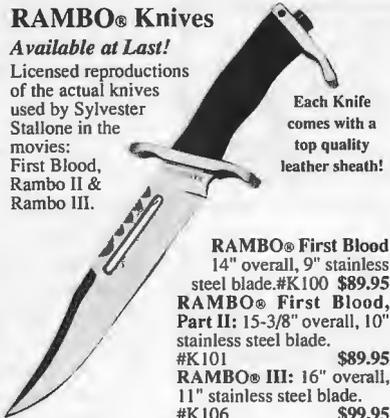
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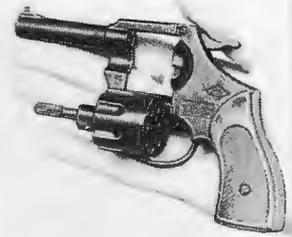
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know what you're doing. It's a useful technique, particularly if a large group is attempting a difficult crossing, but you shouldn't count on it. It takes time to put up, and you won't always have adequate anchor points.

Ropes also can be used to belay the first man across a difficult river. In deep, fast water, this may be the only safe way to cross. The belay line should be a climbing rope. The belay point should be upstream at a distance at least equal to the width of the river to allow the lead man to cross on an upstream diagonal while the belay man keeps tension on the line.

Work out hand signals for "tension" and "slack" before crossing, since white water noise will make voice communication difficult. Once across, the lead man rigs the belay line as a safety line or one-rope bridge.

If possible, select a belay point high on the bank; this will allow the belayer to help the lead man stay upright as well as keep the line out of the water and away from rocks. A carabiner can be rigged to an overhanging branch, with the belay line running up to it and then down to the belayer. Just be sure the branch is strong enough and the tree is rooted securely in the bank.

A belay line can be attached to the lead man by a bowline, but this may slip if he falls. A Swiss seat or climbing harness will provide a more secure anchor. An attachment point at the upstream hip works well for me, but some people like to clip in at the front as in a standard rappel and sidestep across. Go with whatever you feel most comfortable with. I also like to rig a quick-release into the line so I can cut away from it in case I somehow get entangled. But this is an individual thing; if the belay man is doing his job, you won't get tangled if you fall. And, if the crossing is just upstream from dangerous rapids, I wouldn't use a quick release.

Practice crossing easy streams first so you get a feel for current and stream beds under forgiving conditions. As you move to more difficult crossings, keep safety in mind. Under training conditions, it wouldn't hurt to emplace an emergency safety line or net downstream, along with a couple of life-guards, in case someone gets into trouble. Same thing with safety vests — use them when training.

And do train. Rivers are a real part of the combat environment, and you can't always expect the engineers to get there first.

Chuck Fremont is an Army Reserve Special Forces NCO and frequent contributor to SOF. ⚡

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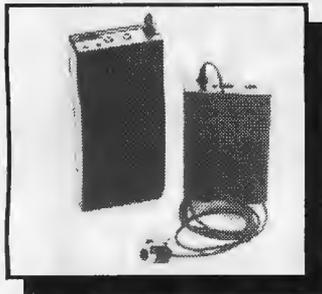
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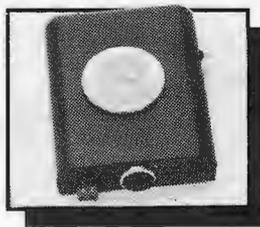
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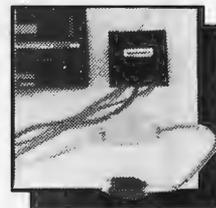
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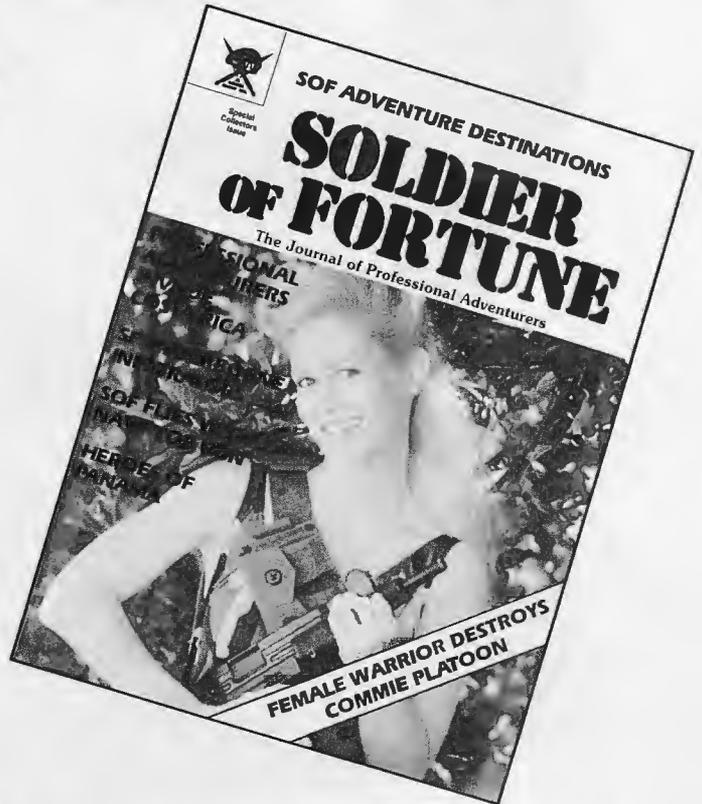
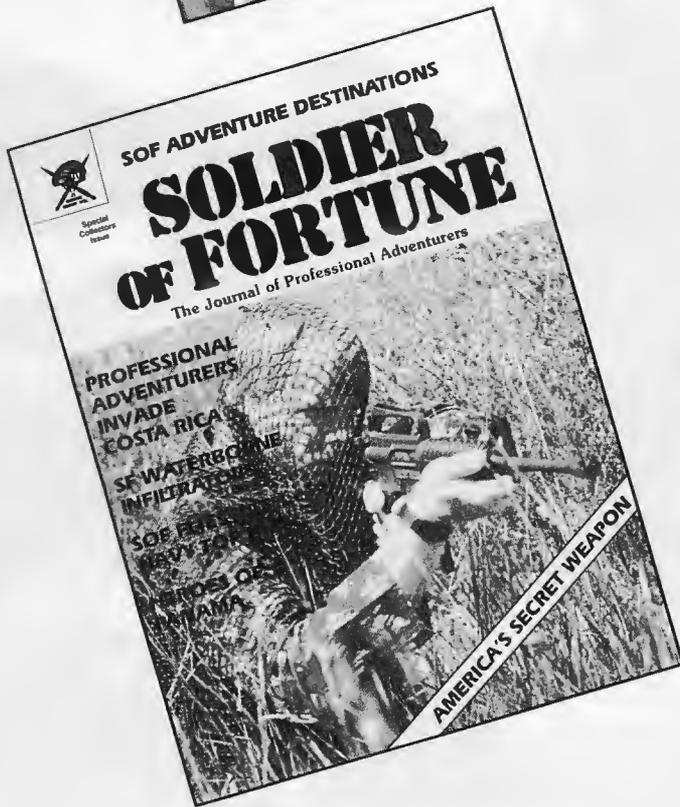
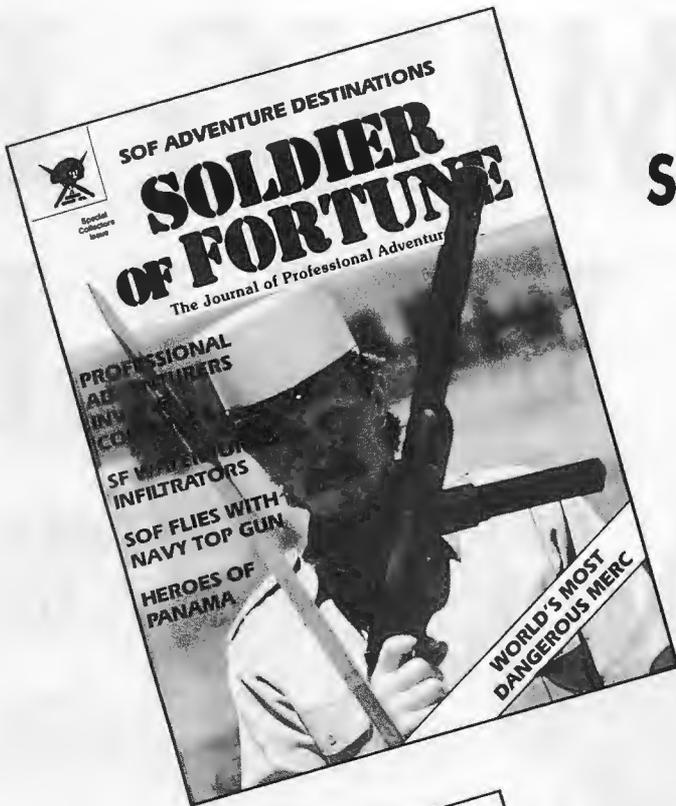
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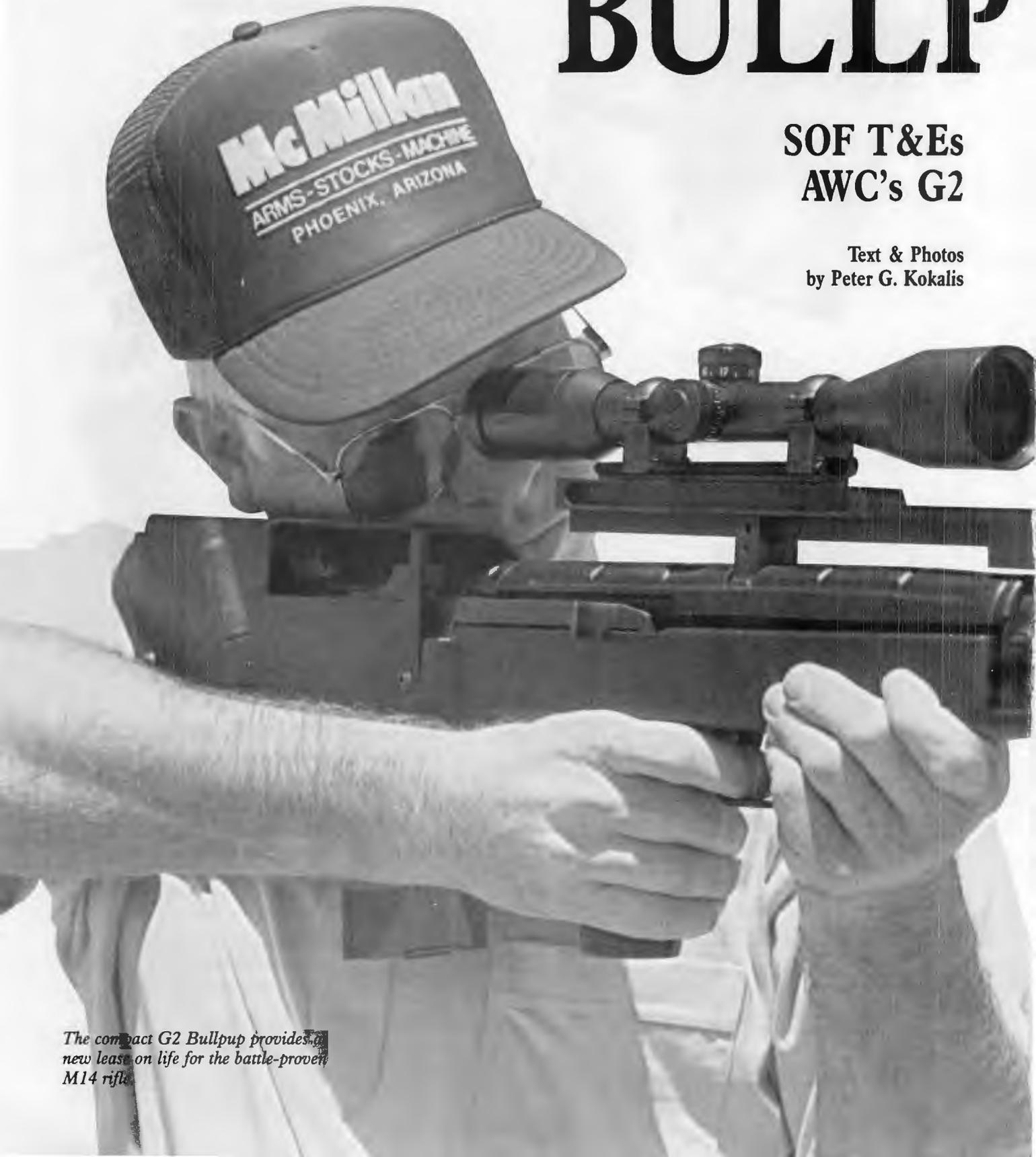
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The compact G2 Bullpup provides a new lease on life for the battle-proven M14 rifle.

IG-BORE UP

Bullpup rifles, which seem to have all the conventional parts in unconventional places and were once scorned by those with a conventional military mind set, have become common sights in the world's hot spots. Three were fielded during Desert Storm: the superb Austrian Steyr AUG, the dreadful British L85A1 and the French FA MAS. With the magazine in the buttstock and the trigger halfway down the barrel, there's no denying that they're compact.

No one has ever been more enamored with the bullpup concept than the British. In August 1902, British engineer J.B. Thornycroft submitted a prototype bolt-action rifle in this configuration to the War Office for consideration by the Small Arms Committee. In trials it was not impressive and all official interest in the

design ceased by 1903, although with the assistance of the well-known arms designer, M.G. Farquhar, it was redesigned using a shorter bolt and two conventional locking lugs.

In 1944, work commenced at Enfield Lock on a new bolt-action bullpup sniper rifle called the SREM I (Sniper Rifle, Experimental, Model I). Increasing emphasis on self-loading rifles halted further development. The EM2 followed, but it and its admirable 7mm cartridge were doomed by power politics. Refusing to throw in the cleaning rag, the British persisted until the L85A1 was adopted. Unfortunately, the design is badly flawed and, in my opinion, the rifle should be abandoned.

Meanwhile, the French FA MAS is now general issue in the French armed forces

and the Steyr AUG has been adopted by Austria, Australia, Morocco, New Zealand, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Ireland and several other nations.

All three of these bullpups — adopted during the mid-1980s — are chambered for the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge. Several years ago, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), seeking a use for the tens of thousands of M14 rifles they had received from Uncle Sugar, authorized production of the Sirkis M36 sniping rifle, which is in essence the M14 rifle converted to bullpup configuration. To date, series production has not materialized.

AWC Systems Technology (Dept. SOF, PO Box 41938, Phoenix, AZ 85080-1938; phone 602-780-1050 — catalog free to FFL holders and legitimate government agencies, \$5 to individuals) has just introduced a caliber 7.62x51mm NATO

bullpup rifle using either M14 or M1A rifles that is significantly superior to the Sirkis M36. Called the G2, the package includes an excellent stock with several unique scope mounts. Also available as options are optical sights and a sound suppressor.

Overall length with standard 22-inch barrel is only 33.5 inches. An optional 18.5-inch barrel, which drops the muzzle velocity by only 65 fps to 2,735 fps, is also available. Without optics and suppressor, the weight of the G2, empty, is 10 pounds (a half pound more than a standard M14).

SpecOps Stock

The G2's compact envelope is, of course, a consequence of its stock, which was designed and is produced by Gale

McMillan exclusively for AWC Systems Technology. McMillan pioneered the use of Fiberglas rifle stocks starting in 1974. Highly regarded — with justification — McMillan stocks will be found in the hands of elite Special Operations personnel and SWAT team members throughout the world.

The shell of the G2 stock is made from a high-density, laminated Fiberglas formed under pressures in excess of 100 pounds per square inch. It is of solid construction throughout, not hollow as are most other makers' synthetic stocks. In the receiver area the stock is composed of solid Fiberglas. To reduce weight, the forearm area has been filled with glass spheres in an epoxy filler. Due to the density of the Fiberglas, the G2 stock is slightly heavier than an equivalent-sized walnut stock.

Just like most modern, production-series wood stocks, the G2 stock is machined using CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machinery. The cheekpiece is made of sturdy 1/8-inch aluminum alloy and would act as a safety shield in the unlikely event that the M14's action should unravel. The original M14 top handguard is retained. Stippling on the pistol grip and forearm is molded into the stock when it is formed. The G2's barreled action is glass bedded into the stock during installation and fitting.

Standard finish is black, but either impregnated or painted-on camouflage patterns and solid colors are available as special-order options. All McMillan stocks carry an unconditional lifetime guarantee. They are totally indestructible, warp-free and thus completely impervious to changing climatic conditions. In addition, they cannot be damaged by petroleum-based solvents commonly used for gun cleaning.

A Pachmayr Decelerator rubber buttpad is standard issue with the G2 stock, as well as a black nylon carrying sling with Uncle Mike's sling swivels. These swivels have quick-release studs with four spring-loaded ball bearing detents. There are three locating points (one on each side of the butt, one up on the forearm on the left side) on the stock so the rifle can be carried both over the shoulder in the conventional manner or in the hip assault position where it can be brought up to the shoulder for instant target acquisition.

Tale Of Two Triggers

The re-positioned trigger, within an aluminum alloy trigger guard, is attached to the original trigger mechanism by means of a shielded, flexible steel cable inside, and integral with (by means of glass bedding) the stock. A 1:1 ratio bell crank transfers trigger pull energy to the original trigger and thus provides exactly the same trigger pull as the standard two-stage M14 trigger. The first stage, or "take-up," travel can be adjusted from zero to that normal for the M14/M1A.

The M14's trigger mechanism was lifted right out of the M1 Garand. Its major components are a hammer with two hooks, a trigger with an extension that is the main sear, and a spring-loaded secondary sear directly behind. When the trigger is cocked, it's held back by the main sear. When the trigger is pulled, the main sear moves forward, driven by its coil spring. When the bolt moves back and rolls the hammer down, it's caught by the secondary sear.

In semiautomatic fire, when the trigger is released, the secondary sear moves back out of engagement with the hammer. As the hammer starts forward after the trigger has been released, it is caught once more by the main sear and held until the trigger is pulled again. In full-auto, the hammer is also held by the secondary sear, but rotation of the eccentric selector shaft to the "A" position moves the connector assembly rearward into contact with the operating rod, and the sear release to the rear into contact with the secondary sear, causing it to release the hammer and fire a round every time the bolt closes until the trigger is released.

The safety is mounted in the front portion of the trigger guard, again, just like the Garand. Push forward to disengage. When engaged it blocks the main sear and prevents the trigger from being pulled rearward. The G2's safety has been extended to clear the stock.

Attached to the trigger housing by a roll pin, the magazine catch release lever must be pressed forward to remove the magazine. Loaded magazines should be tilted forward and rolled back when inserted into the magazine well. Vaguely based on that of the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), the 20-round staggered column box magazine was a decided step forward in reliability. M14 magazines were fabricated by a number of different subcontractors. Their mark will always be found at the back of the magazine's body near the bottom. As they are all milspec, none are to be preferred over any other, but beware of unmarked aftermarket magazines. They cannot be trusted.

Method Of Operation

The M14/M1A method of operation is as follows. After the trigger is squeezed to rotate the hammer forward and drive the firing pin to ignite the cartridge primer, the bullet moves up the bore and a portion of the propellant gases pass through the vent drilled into the bottom of the barrel. They then move past a cut-off valve, which can be rotated for grenade launching, and through a hole in the piston. The piston's hollow interior fills with gas and the piston is forced rearward, driving the operating rod and bolt with it when enough pressure has developed to overcome the forces represented by friction and the recoil spring.

Once the piston starts rearward, its port and the barrel's gas vent are no longer in alignment and no further gas can enter the system, escaping instead to the atmosphere via an exhaust hole in the gas cylinder after the piston has moved backward 1.5 inches. This system supposedly requires no gas regulator, as in theory the pressure required to move the operating rod and bolt will automatically increase until it is sufficient to counter the forces of inertia.

The operating rod goes through 3/8-inch of free travel to permit chamber pressures to drop to a safe level before a hump on the op rod's cam slot forces the bolt roller

G2 Bullpup complete with Swarovski 6x42mm milspec scope and sound suppressor offers a compressed, but accurate, envelope for countersnipers operating in cramped urban environments.



upward. This motion disengages the bolt's two locking lugs from the receiver's locking recesses. This rotation to the left provides the primary extraction required to loosen and unseat the empty case from the chamber. As the bolt moves back, the empty case is extracted and held to the bolt face by the extractor claw. As soon as the case is completely withdrawn from the chamber, the compressed ejector spring drives the "bump" type ejector rod forward to throw the case out of the rifle to the right. The op rod's hump also assists the ejection process to a small degree. The compressed recoil spring drives the bolt forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it.

Powered by a gas system first developed for the White semiautomatic rifle of 1929 and just described, this portion of the M14/M1A consists of five major components. A knurled plug is threaded to the front of the gas cylinder and must be removed with a combination tool. A little more than 3.5 inches in length, the piston has a 1.75-inch solid shaft and 1.75-inch hollow cylinder with seven gas grooves around its external circumference and a single gas port. The gas cylinder itself is held in place by a lock piece threaded to the barrel. A slot-headed spindle valve attached to the gas cylinder must be rotated with the combo tool so its slot is parallel to barrel, shutting off gas flow to the piston, for launching grenades. To all of this, AWC Systems Technology has added a tapered seat to support the rear end of a sound suppressor and provide positive alignment.

The gas system lies under the barrel, which was issued with a chromed chamber and bore. There are four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. Threaded to the receiver at the chamber end, barrel threads at the G2's muzzle retain a modified and re-machined H&K G3 flash suppressor.

The operating rod, recoil spring, guide rod and bolt are also patterned in general after the M1 Garand. While the recoil spring and guide rod still travel in the op rod's hollow interior, the guide rod is held to the receiver by a simple pin connector lock, while that of the Garand is attached to the en bloc clip's follower and spring assembly. A roller has also been added to the M14's right locking lug.

Swarovski Scope

SOF's test specimen was equipped with a stainless steel McMillan heavy barrel. This requires a special scope mount, attached at the front end of the gas cylinder and at the rear to the operating rod guide. G2 scope mounts for standard M14/M1A rifles are attached directly to the barrel. G2 scope mounts are machined from alloy stock and hard-coat black anodized.

Fixed to this mount was a scope for which I have a high regard — the Swarovski ZFM 6x42mm military scope with rangefinder reticle (now made by

G2 BULLPUP SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Win.)
 Operation:Gas. No regulator. Piston impinges upon operating rod. Locking by means of rotary two-lug bolt (with roller on right lug). Fire from the closed-bolt position.
 Feed:20-round detachable, staggered box-type magazine
 Weight, empty:10 pounds.
 Length, overall:33.5 inches (30 inches with optional 18.5-inch barrel.)
 Barrel:Four-groove with a righthand twist of one turn in 12 inches.
 Standard issue:chrome-lined bore and chamber.
 Optional:stainless steel heavy barrel.
 Barrel length:22 or 18.5 inches.
 Sights:Optical. User option. Test specimen equipped with Swarovski 6x42mm Milspec scope with range-finding reticle pattern.
 Finish:Phosphate.
 Furniture:High-density, laminated Fiberglas McMillan bullpup stock with alloy cheekpiece and integral re-positioned trigger system. Standard finish: black; either impregnated or painted-on camouflage patterns and solid colors available as special-order options.
 Accessories:Sound suppressor with overall length of 10 inches and diameter of 1.5 inches. Manufactured entirely of 304 stainless steel. Provides measured sound reduction of 28 dB.
 Manufacturer:AWC Systems Technology, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 41938, Phoenix, AZ 85080-1938. Phone: 602-780-1050. (Catalog free to FFL holders and legitimate government agencies; \$5 to individuals.)
 T&E Summary:Compact and highly maneuverable. Excellent handling characteristics. Good accuracy potential. Low perceived recoil. Reliable and proven design. Ideal for urban counter-sniper applications.



G2 Bullpup, partially disassembled.

Kahles, which is owned by Swarovski). In this instance it was housed in a 1-inch steel tube, but it's also available with an aluminum tube and NATO STANAG 2324 mount. The field of view is 4 degrees, or 7 meters at 100 meters. Luminosity and resolution are outstanding.

After initial zero adjustments, changes in elevation, from 100 to 800 meters, are made by the external adjustment knob on top of the scope which is calibrated for the trajectory of the 7.62x51mm NATO military cartridge. The windage adjustment knob is located on the right side of the scope. The reticle pattern consists of standard crosshairs in the center with thick bars at the outer perimeter. The reticle is non-centered, thus as the range drum is set for

longer distances, the crosshairs move toward the bottom of the field of view. While somewhat disconcerting at first, it serves to instantly alert the shooter to his range setting.

The rangefinding portion of the reticle pattern, located toward the bottom of the field of view, is, in modified form, that of the Soviet Dragunov's PSO-1 scope. This latter pattern, in turn, copies the principal used in the PGO-7 and PGO-7V optical sights of the RPG-7V rocket launcher. It's quite simple, but very effective. There is a baseline with the number "8" (800 meters) under it on the left and a "2" (200 meters) at its right end. Above the baseline are four short ascending steps (corresponding from left to right to 800, 600, 400 and 200 meters), moving upward from the left. Simply place the waist of

your target on the baseline and match the top of your target's head (a distance of approximate v 1 meter on the average human body) with the appropriate step. This is the distance to the target. All that remains (if the rifle and scope have been zeroed) is to dial the equivalent number on the elevation drum.

The ZFM scope is set for parallax-free viewing at 300 meters, but can be changed by turning the ocular. The ocular has been fitted with a protective rubber rim. Six-power magnification offers the best compromise for most sniping applications.

Sound-Suppressed Bullpup

The G2 bullpup rifled submitted to SOF for test and evaluation was also equipped with a sound suppressor. There are, at most, three premier sound suppressor designers in the world today whose products reflect current technology to the maximum extent. All three are in the United States. AWC Systems Technology is one of them.

The G2 caliber 7.62x51mm NATO sound suppressor is manufactured entirely from 304 stainless steel. Overall length is 10 inches with a diameter of only 1.5 inches. It does not employ a wet environment. Of all-welded construction, maintenance consists of no more than occasional flushing with solvent or hot soapy water. The useful life of this suppressor will equal or exceed the life of the barrel to which it is attached. Attached by threads at the muzzle of the barrel, it telescopes over the barrel and thus provides two-point contact to insure alignment and adds only 7.5 inches to the overall length of the rifle when installed.

Sound reduction is substantial — to well below that of a .22LR rimfire pistol. Using a B&K 2209 meter with type 4135 pressure microphone at one meter from the rifle (all exactly as specified by the U.S. government agencies who developed Request For Proposals for sound suppressed weaponry), the measured reduction in sound is 28 dB — from 167 dB for an unsuppressed M14 to 139 dB. Due to the attenuation of sound waves, it seems to the human ear that the drop in sound pressure level is even greater.

Accuracy tests were conducted with Federal 308M match ammunition which uses the 168-grain Sierra MatchKing HPBT (Hollow Point Boat-tail) bullet. While some groups shot to 5/8 MOA at 100 meters, in spite of severe heat mirage in the Lower Sonoran Desert, the G2 bullpup is an honest 1.5 MOA system. Not even the M21 (tuned and scoped sniper version of the M14) will consistently produce better results.

Head Shot Fantasies

If you fantasize about 1/2 MOA rifles for head shots at 1,000 meters, then you must select a turn-bolt. However, the

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"The Department of State advises that American citizens defer all non-essential travel to Peru. U.S. diplomatic facilities, private American affiliated businesses and American religious organizations in Peru have been targeted by terrorists, resulting in fatalities. Two terrorist groups, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), use violent tactics in the cities and countryside to debilitate the Peruvian government." — U.S. Department of State travel advisory

While the above words are intended to keep people away from a given place, in this case, Peru, they represent nothing less than an invitation at SOF. So we accepted the invitation, contacted photojournalist Peter Noble, and asked him to go down and see what was going on.

What follows is the first in an eye-opening, two-part report from the front lines of one of the most obscure and least-understood wars in the Americas.

"Go to Peru and interview terrorists from Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) — the Maoist guerrilla movement," SOF's Executive Editor told me.

I took the assignment unaware of many facts. That the movement had only granted two interviews to journalists in the past 11 years came to light only after my arrival in Lima, the capital. In addition, I learned that the number of people killed to date by Shining Path alone added up to nearly 20,000.

The interview did not take place. To understand why, one first has to understand Shining Path — who they are, what they are, and how they've come to be. There are two guerrilla movements active at this time in Peru: Shining Path and MRTA (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement). Some would say four groups if you count the military and the police.

More than 50% of Peru's territory is in a declared state of emergency and under military control. Access is severely restricted. People wishing to travel to these areas are (usually) limited to journalists and help organizations only, such as the Red Cross, which must apply for special permission. Permission is not always granted, and when it is, does not guarantee safety.

Since 1980, around the time Shining Path became violently active, at least 25 journalists have been killed in Peru. Just recently, American journalist Todd Smith from Tampa, Florida, became a statistic.

In 1990, the death toll was counted at 1,584, second only to 1984, when 1,758 people were killed. And, according to press reports, 91 peasant mayors have been murdered by Shining Path in the past decade.

In the interest of fair reporting, not all of the death can be tied to guerrilla movements. On the very day before SOF's visit to the town of Ayacucho, journalist Louis Morales was gunned down. He was murdered in broad daylight. The gunman followed him from his house and shot him three times in the back and twice in the head as he was entering his niece's apartment.

Morales, a long-time critic of the military's corruption and use of excess force, went on the radio four days before to announce he received a death threat from a paramilitary organization.

TO



HELL ON A SHINING PATH

Civil War in Peru Pits Army
Against Murderers
for Mao

Text & Photos by Peter Noble



Many people have heard that there is turmoil and chaos in Peru; few realize that the Peruvian military is fighting a full-scale civil war against two well-armed terrorist forces (Shining Path and MRTA). Here, Peruvian army troops chase after MRTA terrorists in remote jungles of Taraputo.



Morales brings the number of journalists killed in Ayacucho to 15 since 1980.

But Ayacucho is not the only place in Peru noted for its violence. Having spent only weeks in the country, I can safely say that there are no areas at all unaffected by the war. Nobody was more surprised than I to find myself in the middle of a "dirty little war" (a phrase that became all too familiar during my stay).

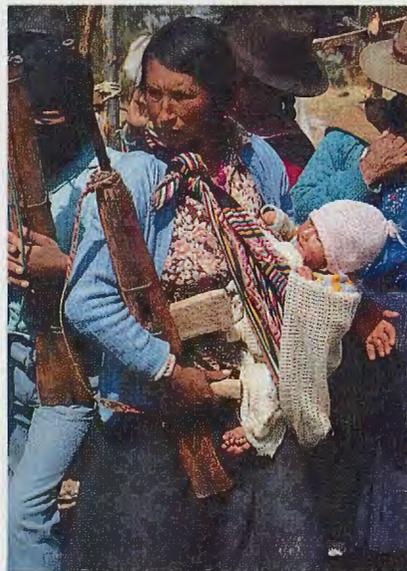
However, I would question the "little" part of that phrase. Peru was very clearly a country fighting a full-scale civil war. It was a war ignored by the rest of the world, but not overlooked by the 20 million people who had to go to bed and wake up every day with the threat of violence and death as a daily occurrence.

During our stay in Taraputo, home of the MRTA terrorist movement, we attempted to get information about an incident that took place just weeks before our visit. Fifteen to 20 decapitated bodies had been dumped by the side of the road just 15km from town. Everybody expressed surprise in our interest.

"After all," we were told, "these things happen all the time — no big deal." This incident did not even make the papers. Frequent murders, however gruesome, were just daily phenomena these people lived with. And with two terrorist organizations both fighting their own wars, targets for further murders are everywhere.

For the first few days, I spent my time criss-crossing Lima getting signature after signature on this form or that form. It all had to do with getting permission to accompany the military on various operations. At one point, I questioned the motives of the whole situation, and wondered if perhaps all the signatures were not just a ploy to discourage journalists.

I spent one morning making phone calls, and the afternoon shuffling from depart-



In one of the more absurd military mismatches conceivable, Peruvian peasants in the hills near Ayacucho are given spears, sticks, and homemade weapons such as these to fight off armed-to-the-teeth Shining Path terrorists.

ment to department in the Ministry of Information to establish my press credentials. Stamp this, sign that, have a photo taken, have it stamped, then pick up another form, have it signed. When I finally arrived at the department with all my papers intact, I really wasn't surprised to find out that it had already closed and I would have to come back the next day.

Rat-A-Tat-Tat ... Boom!

Returning to the motel, I retrieved my messages, hoping at least the morning's efforts had paid off. It was when I was returning a call that I heard in the background what sounded like gunfire. It

was the unmistakable sound of an automatic weapon firing. Before I had time to ask about it, the person on the other line asked, "Did you hear that? Did you hear that?"

Then there was an explosion, a big one, and I could hear the gunfire getting louder. Pulling on pants with one hand, grabbing camera gear with the other, I got the address for the guy I had been speaking to and dashed out the door and into a taxi. Looking down, I still had my shoes in my hand. But I was finally on the move. The driver turned around and tried to explain in his few words of English, "Boom! Boom! Terrorista! Terrorista! [terrorist] — not for gringo!" But I got him to go, anyway.

Arriving at the address, I see my friend waving for me to come. We run down half a block, where he informs me it was the minister of economics's home. Security forces guarding his residence had exchanged automatic gunfire with terrorists.

Inquiring about the situation, some locals motion us down the street 25 yards, where we see a half-track that had been stationed with two military personnel. Apparently, terrorists drove by slowly in a car and fired a rocket-propelled grenade at the half-track.

Detonating just a few inches from the top, it killed the sentry on top. But there was little damage — just a fresh pool of blood under the truck. There was a group of black-clad special police, complete with ski masks, pointing to the windows in the house with bullet holes in them.

On a side street around the corner from the house was evidently where one terrorist had dropped off a couple of his accomplices while he fired the rocket at the truck as a diversion. The others fired a 40mm grenade at the minister of economics's house. This one went through two side windows of a Volkswagen and failed to detonate. I overheard the special police questioning if there was a possibility of it exploding; one also mentioned a grenade that had been found several days before by a group of curious children. They picked it up and banged it on a wall — it exploded and killed them all.

During an attack here, at the home of the Peruvian minister of economics in Lima, MRTA terrorists sprayed windows with automatic weapons fire, put a Volkswagen out of commission, and killed one sentry.





Author reports that many Peruvian peasants say there are a total of four terrorist groups in their country: Shining Path and MRTA, as well as the military and police. Peasants are harassed by soldiers (this one pictured with FN FAL) if they are suspected of assisting rebel groups.

Murder By MRTA

The responsibility for this attack was placed with MRTA, who, unlike Shining Path, make a point of targeting government buildings and security forces. MRTA carries out a traditional guerrilla war, primarily using automatic weapons, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

In a recent show of strength, MRTA attacked the cities of Jargin, Saposa, Bellavistia, Mayabamba and Rioja all during the same evening and approximately at the same time. During the attack, nine police officers were taken hostage with most police stations and

military installations damaged or destroyed.

It was a slap in the face to the security forces, who, in the five weeks that followed, were unable to locate the hostages despite the fact that they had appeared several times on TV interviews and in local newspapers.

In other demonstrations of force, MRTA attacked 49 banks one evening, and in another attack, knocked out power to almost all of Peru. At the same time, a 100-kilo bomb was found in the Centro Camine Royal Mall. If it had successfully exploded, the damage and death it would have caused is hard to imagine.

Journalists' Graveyard

I wake up at 0600 one day and await departure to Ayacucho. To say I have reservations about this trip would be an understatement. It is, after all, the birthplace of Shining Path, originally formed at Ayacucho University in the mid-1960s by Abimael Guzman, known to followers as "President Gonzalo."

This was a political organization until the early 1980s, when it unleashed a violent attack on a rural police station. The wave of violence perpetrated by Shining Path since then is like none I have ever been seen before. According to Peruvian press reports, 13 of every 14 massacres of peasants carried out in 1989 in Ayacucho were the work of Shining Path.

Shining Path's declared purpose: to destroy all existing Peruvian institutions and replace them with a revolutionary regime inspired in part by Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution in China. Shining Path terrorists intimidate by frequently executing (in gruesome ways) anyone who does not side with their movement or is considered to have government ties with civil defense patrols. The patrols are groups of peasants in villages that the

military has provided arms, basically to use as a front-line defense. But peasants are considered "canon fodder" by the military and are expendable.

I'm sitting here watching the wife and son of Lewis Morales (the 15th journalist to be killed in Ayacucho), board the plane. The family is dressed in dark clothes, carrying flowers; they also have his picture. With this picture, the reality hits home of how really dangerous this country has become.

Four or five other journalists and photographers board the plane, and as we are introduced, the thought occurs to me

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Hardly a match for seasoned Shining Path terrorists armed with Kalashnikovs and mortars, a little peasant girl in Ayacucho gets some basic instruction on what to do the next time her village is attacked.

A PATH LITTERED WITH CORPSES

Shining Path's ultimate aim is to destroy the government and the social order of Peru. The movement also claims to support the peasant population, but is only too quick to kill those who displease it. Shining Path has a very strict code of conduct among its members that includes no smoking and no drinking of alcohol. Also, despite showing support for Peruvian coca growers and aiding narcotics traffickers, it has publicly executed members found using drugs.

Members of Shining Path have shown no favoritism over the past 10 years: they



At a time when most of the communist world is rethinking its ways, Shining Path terrorists and their many supporters envision a rosy red future complete with the ideas of Mao and Stalin for inspiration.

tacking everyone.

In 1988 alone, Shining Path was responsible for the economic loss of some \$2.65 billion in Peru. It has claimed responsibility for numerous blackouts in Lima and other areas by bombing electri-

cal pylons and installations. Rural development projects have been attacked and their engineers killed. Also in 1988, Shining Path attacked a development project run by the European Economic Community (EEC). As a result, the EEC recalled all of its aid workers.

Over the years, Shining Path has frequently attacked the very projects that will help the peasant population it claims to support. Its aim is to undermine the government and attempt to persuade the peasants that there is no hope for improvement until Shining Path takes over. "In a war," Abimael Guzman, Shining Path's founder, said, "what you can't use or carry off, you destroy; you burn."

Estimates of the number of Shining Path terrorists range to as many as 5,000, with many more supporters. They also seem to be successfully recruiting from the Peruvian middle and upper classes.

— P.N.

IN SEARCH OF MIAs

by Garry L. Smith

You don't hear much about them, and what you do hear is usually couched in only the vaguest of terms. They're the U.S. military investigative teams that physically check out crash and other sites inside Vietnam, trying to solve parts of the decades-old MIA puzzle. This article represents a "day in the life" of a team on the ground; the crash sites they investigated were those of F-4 Phantom and other aircraft, although the details remain classified information.

American servicemen from all four military services have routinely returned to Vietnam in recent years to investigate active MIA (missing in action) cases from the Vietnam War, but the investigative team that returned to the Ashau Valley in August 1989 was all Army.

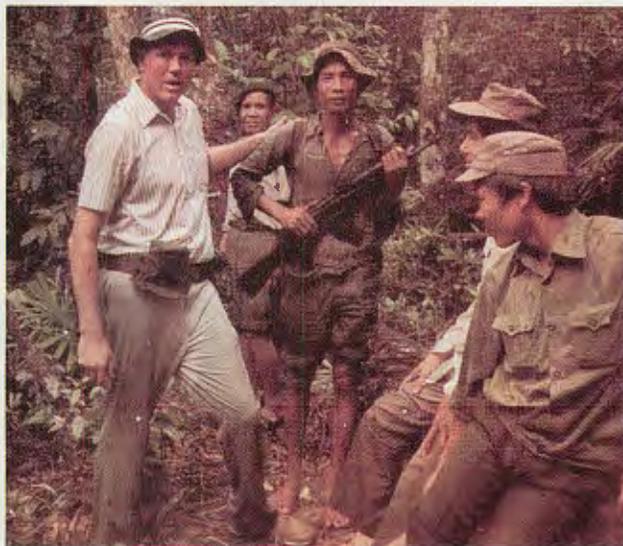
This team was composed of myself, an Army warrant officer from the Liaison Office of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) located in the American Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand; Master Sergeant David W. Atherton, an Army intelligence analyst from HQ, JCRC in Honolulu; Sergeant First Class Randy Brown, an Army graves registration specialist; and Sergeant First Class James Williams, also a graves registration specialist. Both SFC Brown and SFC Williams were from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI).

Our team took off from Bangkok in an Air Force C-130, crossed Laos, and landed at the Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi. From Noi Bai we were transported to the Le Thach Foreign Ministry Guest House in downtown Hanoi, where we spent the rest of the afternoon arranging our gear and checking our American-made Jeep Cherokees for the upcoming investigations.

We also coordinated with our Vietnamese counterparts who were to be our fellow team members over the next 20 days. Our counterparts were Ho Xuan Dich, from the Foreign Ministry, Major Pham Teo, from the Ministry of Defense, and Tran Trien, from the Ministry of the Interior.

During the next two days, our American and Vietnamese team traveled south down Highway One, which is the major north-south route in the country. On the afternoon of the second day, our team reached Hue City, capital seat of Thua Thien Province. This was to be our base as we made preparations to operate in the Ashau Valley.

After several days of preliminary investigations and preparation, our joint team traveled by automobile from Hue to Phu Bai Airport to board a Soviet Mi-17 helicopter that would take us to the Ashau, which was located in A-Luoi District, Thua Thien Province. Phu Bai was a big American base back during the war, but now there were very few signs Americans were ever there. All of the barracks and most of the buildings are gone. At one time, Phu Bai, like other American bases in Vietnam, was ringed with concertina wire and had watch towers every few



Familiar AO to many SOF readers: the Ashau Valley. CW4 Smith with guide and team members "take five" during their investigation of numerous crash sites. Photo: courtesy author

hundred feet or so. None of that remained.

From Phu Bai we flew to the village of A-Luoi in the Ashau, which sits at the foot of Dong Ap Bia Mountain — better known to Americans who fought there as "Hamburger Hill." At A-Luoi, mobs of local people turned out to see the helicopter and the Americans. We noticed right away that most of the locals were an ethnic minority, which we learned was the Pa-Coh.

At A-Luoi District headquarters, the joint team and province team met with

senior officials of A-Luoi District. After a greeting by the chairman (a Pa-Coh minority with holes in his earlobes) of the A-Luoi District People's Committee, our team interviewed two witnesses to an MIA incident.

The two witnesses were former National Liberation Front (NLF) — Viet Cong — soldiers who served in A-Luoi District during the war. One was an NLF lieutenant colonel named Cu Pang. During the war, Cu Pang had commanded five NLF military districts, one of which was Military District Three, within which the cases we were investigating occurred. The other witness had been a soldier under the former lieutenant colonel's command and assigned to Military District Three.

After interviewing the two former Viet Cong, we flew by Soviet-made helicopter to inspect various case sites from the air. However, there was fog on the mountains and we had to stay in the center portion of the Ashau Valley. Since we were prevented by fog from flying over the mountains on either side of the valley, we eventually had to fly back to Phu Bai, then return to Hue by car.

Because of bad weather, we were eventually forced to drive to the Ashau Valley by automobile, and then enter the investigative sites on foot. But to get to the Ashau from Hue is complicated, even though it's not very far. The road between Hue and the Ashau is absolutely horrible and takes an entire day of driving. Therefore, we elected to drive north from Hue to Quang Tri City, cut west along the bottom of the old demilitarized zone (DMZ) to the Laotian border, and then south to A-Luoi in the Ashau Valley.

Upon reaching A-Luoi we had some free time, so we walked around sightseeing. During our leisurely walk, a large group of Vietnamese gathered around us and a woman in the crowd asked MSG Atherton where he was from. Dave replied in Vietnamese, "Hoa Ky" (America). Rather heatedly, she asked, "Are you from the same America that bombed all of the villages around here?" Quick as a flash, Dave answered in Vietnamese, "No, not that America; I'm from the other one!"

The next day, we finally traveled in by foot to investigate the area where we'd

been unable to land by helicopter a few days previously. Most of the route we walked was along a former segment of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, as evidenced by rusting remnants of destroyed Chinese trucks and fuel drums. This "trail" (actually a road), now overgrown with jungle vegetation, passed between two mountain peaks on which were once located U.S. firebases Tiger and Turnage.

As we walked along, LTC Cu Pang told me about some of the battles that had been fought in that very area. On one occasion, he and I stopped to salute the war dead on both sides.

At our destination, we began searching the area with metal detectors and by digging. There, local Pa-Coh people had supposedly found a parachute, a pilot's helmet (which turned out later to be a U.S. Army-type steel helmet), a pair of jungle boots, and a pair of wire-rimmed glasses. During the search by our joint team, we found pieces of burned fabric, four pairs of burned jungle boots, a belt buckle, a piece of entrenching tool, three U.S. Army metal helmets (one was peppered with shrapnel holes), two fiberglass helmet liners, pieces of a flak jacket, scraps of fatigue uniforms, and empty C-ration cans.

The location was clearly a site occupied at one time by either U.S. or Allied forces. We determined that because of the duplication of items of equipment and clothing that were present, they likely did not pertain to the particular case that we were investigating; consequently, we retraced our route back to A-Luoi Village.

The next day, SFC Jim Williams and I undertook a difficult journey by foot through dense, leech-infested jungle to where U.S. records indicated the crash site and last known location of the pilot was. Jim and I were led to the site by former Viet Cong soldiers who fought in the area during the war. Also present were several members of the province team and some officials from A-Luoi District. Jim and I noted with interest that the former NLF soldiers carried AK-47 and SKS assault rifles, which they told us were the same weapons they had carried during the war.

After a fatiguing journey along swift rivers and through thick jungle, we eventually reached the area where our records indicated a crash had occurred. We had to cut our way in by machete because of the heavy vegetation. Jim and I observed underground bunkers and fighting positions, which the former Viet Cong soldiers said had been constructed during the war by a platoon from Military District Three.

One of the old soldiers said that periodically he had been stationed at this very place. Also in the vicinity of the bunkers we saw craters, metal fragments, and scars on trees, which indicated that the area had been attacked by artillery or air. However, we saw no evidence of aircraft wreckage at the site.

We then cut our way through the jungle to search the area our records indicated

was the last known location of the pilot of the case, but we found no evidence of any personal effects, remains, or grave site. In that area was one of the most beautiful waterfalls that Jim and I had ever seen. It crashed majestically down several hundred feet to a jungle river. If the pilot was buried in that area, his final, mortal resting place was definitely a scene of earthly splendor.

By this time, Jim and I were exhausted. The Vietnamese members of the team didn't seem to be too bad off, though. They slipped through the jungle with ease, while we crashed through. We saw first-hand what a formidable foe these tough old soldiers must have been.

We camped on a river bank in the jungle, and the Vietnamese made a lean-to from branches and leaves for us to sleep under as well as a delicious dinner of local Pa-Coh dishes. Later, our former enemies insisted on sleeping on either side of us to protect us, which was an ironical turn of events to say the least.

The next morning, Jim and I ate a hearty breakfast of U.S.-made MREs (Meal, Ready to Eat), and the Vietnamese had leftovers from the night before. We broke camp and repeated the difficult trip back the way we had come. We came to a Pa-Coh village, where one of our former Viet Cong guides lived. He invited us to rest in his humble mud and thatch-roofed home while we waited for transportation back to A-Luoi.

There, he showed us his wartime decorations and introduced us to one of his two wives. Word eventually came from Pa-Coh children that our drivers had arrived and were waiting for us on the Ashau Valley road. We hiked across a stream to the road and loaded into the vehicles, which took us back to A-Luoi safe and sound, but absolutely beat.

Our fellow team members had also returned to A-Luoi from conducting a mission the same time that Jim Williams and I were making our jungle odyssey. They said one of the local Pa-Coh people, Cu Le, led them across incredibly dangerous mountains to a helicopter crash site. After inspecting wreckage at the site and determining the location on maps, MSG Atherton and SFC Brown, the CILHI specialists, decided that the crash site likely pertained to a resolved helicopter incident and probably had no relation to the case under investigation.

Several days later, we traveled to an area near La Dut Hamlet, Bac Son Village, which is several kilometers from A-Luoi, and met with the village militia commander. He agreed to act as a guide to lead the team to a crash site. On the way, we came across a rusted U.S. M60 machine gun lying beside a jungle trail. The gun came from a U.S. helicopter and had likely been carried from a crash site by Pa-Coh metal hunters.

We made a difficult climb up a muddy

mountain trail, during which time we constantly pulled off blood-filled leeches that latched onto our boots and crawled up our legs in search of a meal. When we reached the top at the end of our climb, we precariously crawled down over a precipice to a jungle stream, where our team observed helicopter wreckage. After shooting compass azimuths and plotting our location, we determined the crash site was likely a resolved CH-47 helicopter incident, and did not pertain to any of the cases we were investigating.

We needed to move on to another site, but when we saw that we'd have to travel further downstream and drop down several waterfalls, we seriously considered calling off the search. All of the MIA team leaders investigating cases in Vietnam had been instructed by our superiors at JCRC not to risk living soldiers for dead ones.

But when we looked back to where we had come, which would have been our route back should we have chosen to abort, we determined going back would be as dangerous as going forward. Therefore, we elected to travel downstream and down the sides of treacherous and vicious but absolutely beautiful waterfalls to the bottom of a ravine. According to our records, that would be the crash site, but we found no evidence that any aircraft had crashed there.

After concluding the investigation of our assigned cases in the Ashau Valley, we traveled north out of the valley into Quang Tri Province where we investigated two other cases. The information we obtained from those will hopefully lead to their successful resolution. We then returned to Hanoi, where we took the opportunity to celebrate our safe return by eating an American-style dinner at one of the private restaurants in the city. After almost three weeks of Vietnamese food, it was a welcome treat.

Early next morning, the Vietnamese took us to the Noi Bai International Airport, where we met a U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft that had come to take us back to Bangkok. As the aircraft rumbled aloft, I considered the fact that not only had we helped resolve a few unanswered questions from the war, but also that we were the first American GIs to return to the Ashau Valley since the war.

My old unit, the 101st Airborne Division, had been one of the major units to fight in that valley, and for me, that made the trip incredibly rewarding. My teammates too, I think, wouldn't have traded their memories of this trip for much else in the world.

Chief Warrant Officer Garry L. Smith recently retired from the U.S. Army, after spending 21 years on active duty in the Military Intelligence field. He worked with the JCRC, Bangkok, for 3 years, and traveled widely throughout the Pacific Rim as a POW/MIA investigator. ✕

I couldn't tell if they were kidding when our UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) welcoming committee said we had to clear their immigration and customs. After all, this was a rebel camp in the middle of southeast Angola's bush and a thousand miles from anything except for a war, which was all around it. My companions, Bob and Sibyl MacKenzie, and I looked at each other. "Is this for real?" we telecommunicated.

UNITA shunted us into a building where we stood around in front of a desk, behind which sat a fellow in beret and green uniform. "O seu passaporte, por favor," he said, which I took to mean he wanted the passports. With the bored expression it takes years for immigration types to cultivate, he idly leafed through our papers while four or five other guys in uniform, and with guns, hung around watching.

"Ever been to Angola?" he asked in *Ingles*, scanning my particular blue book for giveaways like "Customs & Immigration, Luanda." I had actually been in Angola a few years back, riding Casspir armored personnel carriers with a bunch of police counterinsurgents from South West Africa chasing guerrillas up into southern Angola, but no one had bothered to check passports when we crossed the border.

It didn't seem a good time to mention that little incursion, so I said no. He kept



Author attempted to purloin this captured Soviet-made Dragunov sniping rifle from UNITA's weapons workshop, but figured customs in London wouldn't buy the "African trinket" story. Photo: Robert MacKenzie

the leafing up, and I wondered what I'd do if he said my passport flunked immigration. Jamba is truly a long way from anywhere you could catch transport to go

(IN AND) OUT OF

ANGOLA

Winning the War in a Land Far, Far Away

by John Coleman

someplace else.

But we passed passport muster and in turn were directed along to customs, its office behind a curtain in the same room. "E' favor abrir este saco," — "Open the bag, pal" — which I figured out because the MacKenzies were opening theirs. No matter what else happened during our stay, I knew UNITA and its bureaucracy were ready for the world league.

As I write this some time later in my Boulder office, it's apparent that most everyone else thinks the same thing. Jose Eduardo dos Santos, head of the Angolan Marxist MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) government — which had placed its bets on the Soviet Union and Cuba, and lost — and Dr. Jonas Savimbi, founder and CEO of UNITA — which had placed its bets on the United States, South Africa and others, and won — shook hands in Lisbon, Portugal, back in June and said, "OK, enough's enough," thus ending 16-plus years of civil war.

Now, if I were cynical enough, having watched cease-fire after cease-fire fall apart in Angola, I'd be tempted not to hold my breath over this one. But, as I write this in July, the two military forces are integrating, nobody's killed anybody lately so far as we know, and electioneering has taken the place of Su-22 bombing runs (although one could argue which might be worse).

If all goes according to plan this'll end

up at the polling stations in September 1992, monitored by guys named Sven and Rahjib in their powder blue berets, and Savimbi Inc. will probably have the inside line. When you've got a dos Santos economy where beer's the only negotiable currency, and freedom of choice means choosing between voluntary or involuntary conscription into an army staffed by surrogate Fidelists and Stalinists — well, you've got to reckon the locals are ready to see what the other guy has to offer.

Beachfronts In Tomorrowland

We got a glimpse of that while we were in Jamba, capital of Free Angola, and if what we saw is any indication of what's to come, then I'd advise buying beachfront lots in Luanda while you still can. I still find it hard to believe that what we saw was, in fact, reality, and not some sort of Angolan version of Tomorrowland where everything's up and running for the tourists, then shuts down for the night.

We paid our admission price — a little round-table discussion to ensure we weren't ratfink spies or liberal Democrats — then hopped on our first ride: newish left-hand-drive Toyota Land Cruisers. Considering just about everything in that part of Africa is right-hand drive, one could presume these vehicles came courtesy of Uncle Sam in some form or another. In fact, there was a whole bunch of stuff in Jamba with "Made in the USA"



figuratively stamped all over it, probably in down payment for some of that beachfront property later on (at least what's left after the South Africans get finished).

About 20 minutes later, after pounding our kidneys on the second-worst roads in Africa (Kenya's Nairobi-Mombassa link gets top honors), we were deposited at what we called the Jamba Safari Lodge. I've stayed in weird guerrilla bush camps the world over, but this place outclassed a goodly number of hotels SOF journalists usually frequent.

I was given a double bed in hut 24, complete with wattle-thatch roof, built-in shower, tasteful light olive green paint and matching carpet, and crispy white sheets

"Whatever it was, by God, it's dead now."
 Photo: UNITA photo section, Jamba

with rose pattern. No mint on the pillow, but hey, it's a war zone. And lest you think we had it too easy, there were little animal things scurrying up and down the walls and across the floor all night. And the shower dripped.

We had a brief dinner that evening, breaking a bit of ice with a few drinks and working out our schedule for the next 24 hours. We made our bid to see things mostly military; UNITA in turn let us know that we could see the schools, hospitals, administrative set-up, work shops, radio and television broadcast stations — the stuff they show to the

Although Angola has meant little to most Americans, Uncle Sam has invested a great deal of effort and money in supporting UNITA — though not without much resistance from elements in the State Department and Congress. For once, however, we stayed the course and the good guys won.

scores of itinerant journalists, politicians and relief agency reps who've chanced upon Jamba over the years.

Part of political reality is the perception of that reality, of course, and UNITA puts its best foot forward in demonstrating to visitors that rag-tag they are not;



SOF Contributing Editor Robert MacKenzie props up captured Soviet 130mm cannon. Over the years, the Soviets have generously contributed to UNITA's arms chest — though not by choice. Photo: John Coleman

organized, disciplined and ready to govern, they are. And that includes letting itinerant visitors see just what UNITA wants them to see. Good salesmanship, I call it.

Before hitting the rack, the MacKenzies and I chatted about what we'd do if the MPLA military wing launched a surprise attack against rooms 24 and 25 that night. Granted, it was an unlikely scenario as the previous half-zillion Soviet- and Cuban-backed MPLA ground offensives against Jamba over the years had not produced anything worth writing the Kremlin about, but it always pays to have some sort of contingency plan. We agreed on Cape Town as a rendezvous; if the MPLA chased us that far, well, they deserved Angola.

Having forgotten the time change from where we'd been the day before, I was up brighter and earlier than most the next morning. There was already activity around the camp — cockerals crowing, people sweeping up, carrying water and the like — while I strolled around, and I noticed that as I strolled, a well-armed guard discretely strolled along with me.

I made a half-hearted effort to leave the fenced-in compound, just for a bit of a look-around, and he unlimbered his AKM. It was all very polite and smiley, but he was bound to carry out his first General Order: "I will guard everything within the limits of my post, and not allow anybody like you to leave it." Understandable. You don't let people wander about unescorted through the Pentagon either.

We had a palatable breakfast of mystery meat and kick-start coffee, then hit the road. We had two highly expressive and English-proficient Foreign Affairs Ministry reps — Captain Jose' de Castro and Lieutenant David Demwaketele — glued to us, and I put it to the captain: "Don't you get sick of escorting journalists like us around day after day?"

"We all have our jobs to do," he answered with a shrug, and I figured sure, tour-guide duty does beat the hell out of live-fire exercises up on the central front.

But I found out later that he'd been with



Dr. Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's chief executive officer, is probably one of the most successful African leaders in recent times. Through his strong personality and application of complex political and military maneuvers, he's brought Angola to the brink of democracy. Photo: UNITA photo section, Jamba

trip, but Bob MacKenzie said he'd be happy to come back later and do it. Weird thing was, he meant it. Fifteen years of living in Africa can do that to you.

It was during our Land Cruiser ride down to the medical shop that I made one startling discovery — Jamba had traffic cops — and divined one revelation — that given enough cigarettes now, I could probably secure the Jamba Safari Lodge concession after the war.

As we bounded around a corner of a bush dirt road and came up to the intersection of another bush dirt road, lo and behold stood a traffic cop on a wooden platform, pressed uniform, white gloves, sidearm, shiny helmet liner and all, waving us through. Jamba may be the

capital of Free Angola, but traffic jammed they are not. I don't think I saw more than three vehicles together at any one time during our stay, and they were parked. Like everything else they do at Jamba, perhaps this chap was being groomed for headier days to come in Luanda.

My revelation dawned when I passed cigarettes around to my Angolan Cruiser mates and most of them vanished. I hadn't really thought about it the night before at dinner, but the same thing had happened then. And earlier, when we'd stood around waiting for the vehicles to arrive. By God! Send in R.J. Reynolds — Jamba had no smokes! Being an addict myself, I could understand and empathize

UNITA since 1974, and probably had more combat time in than the entire Desert Storm Coalition force combined. He did say that if we had three or so weeks to kill he'd escort us up to the front, but with the war winding down, there might not be much to see once we got there. Three weeks of bouncing to death in a captured Soviet URAL truck, staring at mile after mile of dried bush, didn't happen to fit into this

with the quietly heartfelt sighs of relief behind the clouds of smoke filling our four-wheeler. Had I known the value of a single butt at the beginning, I would've held out for at least an honorary ministerial position.

These two small vignettes are not mentioned merely in passing, but to make a point about UNITA's situation at the end of April. Indicative of their desire to be taken seriously as a shadow government was that traffic cop, gearing up for the big time. Indicative of the fact that UNITA is at the far end of a very long supply line was that cigarettes — and most other things, ranging from medical supplies to carbon paper — just aren't available in Jamba.

Black Guys With White Hats And Red Books

Yet for all of it, UNITA has managed to get itself recognized and stay alive long enough to become a major, if not the major, force in Angola. It's a tribute to Savimbi's charismatic force of intellect and personality — and his application of Mao Zedong's principles of guerrilla warfare, for once successfully applied by the good guys.

We spent the day viewing what UNITA had told us we would view, and hearing pretty much what we figured we would hear. That's not to say I was ungrateful, or unappreciative of the fact that a number of their people took time out to brief us. But if you've got visitors coming nearly every week, most of whom a week prior figured Angola meant silky goat's hair, then you tend to gear your briefings toward the lowest common denominator — namely, visiting journalists and politicians.

Nonetheless, what we heard and saw was impressive enough. On a rather rough basis, UNITA's Jamba infrastructure paralleled what you might find in any averagetown U.S. of A.: cops, a decent hospital, schools (from which many of the UNITA hierarchy graduated before continuing their education overseas), radio

and television stations (courtesy of Uncle Sam's interest in beachfront property), work shops, a garment industry, government offices, and anti-aircraft towers sporting Stinger surface-to-air missiles. Kind of things you'd see most anywhere except better run, and they literally rather than figuratively get bombed occasionally.

One small thing stuck in my mind from the tour, and that was a set of silverware neatly laid out on a bench inside their implements shop. One of us made mention of it, and the bossman rattled off an explanation in Portuguese. I wish I'd brought home a set



Not an interesting photo by itself — unless you know the background. These eating utensils are made from the skins of Soviet-made helicopters shot down by UNITA forces. Recycling the hard way. Photo: John Coleman

SOF Contributing Editor Robert MacKenzie, sporting stylish Mao cap manufactured at Jamba, receives fabric tips from the head of UNITA's garment industry. Photo: John Coleman



because, as it was translated to me, they carve those things out of the skins of Soviet helicopters they shoot down. One of those symbiotic Indian/buffalo relationships except that for 16 years the buffalo shot back.

We ended off the day with a military briefing conducted by an intelligence section lieutenant colonel who looked liked he'd rather be facing a T-62 tank than the phalanx of generals, colonels and us staring at him. With War College proficiency, he whacked his pointer against maps of their various fronts and completely baffled us with enemy and friendly force unit designations, positions, actions and future actions. For example: "The 5th Task Force moved in close to Luanda while the 32 Tactical Group has joined the 5th to retake Cabala and has moved forces belonging to the 1st Task Force deployed at a bridge while the advanced common force moved into Cabala." Riyadh's Coalition briefers couldn't have said it better.

Since we had a fair handle on the military situation anyway, I didn't ask him to run through it again, although I did give him a "well done, good job, colonel" in front of all his bosses. Since he knew what he meant as presumably did everyone else in the room but us, and given the fact they were the guys fighting this war, that was all that mattered. Unless he just winged it as he went along, I was suitably impressed that they had such a good grasp of the tactical and strategic military situation in Angola, fog of battle being what it is at the best of times. No doubt some of Uncle Sam's and Oom de Klerk's electronic wizardry helped out a bit.

Four-Star Farmer

We ended the day with tea, coffee, cookies, cake, and the last of my cigarettes. I chatted with Divisional General Eugenio Antonio Ngolo, *nom de guerre* "Manuvakola," who had spent part of the afternoon with us. The general had been with UNITA since 1974, and had been part of the 1976 "Great March" with Savimbi as they trekked all over Angola looking for a suitable place from which to start the war.

He'd risen quickly and ably in the

organization, and probably had a bright political future in the post-war years. I asked him what his plans were.

"Maybe I'll be a farmer," he answered. After 20-something years doing war — he'd soldiered for the Portuguese in the pre-independence days — sitting on the stoop watching the locusts munch

Sibyl MacKenzie, representing the Washington, D.C.-based Global Strategy Council, and SOF Managing Editor John Coleman during late afternoon military briefing with UNITA hierarchy. Coleman and Gen. Manuvakola discussed the relative merits of farming as a post-war career. Photo: Robert MacKenzie



Not really appropriate to this article, but a good photo of a Kenyan leopard which might otherwise never see print. Photo: Robert MacKenzie

probably sounded just fine to him. I'd asked a lot of people that day what their plans were, and heard a lot about rebuilding the country, healing old wounds, revitalizing the economy — a typical Democrat's answer to George Bush. But Gen. Manuvakola sounded like he meant it, although I've got a feeling that Savimbi isn't going to let this fellow spend his days planting mealesies or hoeing weeds.

When the MacKenzies and I got back to where we'd started from (I've had to be vague about travel arrangements for this trip because the people who organized it asked me to), I wandered off to have a beer and write up some ideas for this piece. My pages stayed blank for a couple of beers,

mainly because this wasn't really an SOF-type of story. Sure, we'd gone into war-zone Angola and everyone had guns, but I felt a helluva lot safer there than I did on some of Bob Brown's annual hunting trips. Jamba was fairly provincial and, well, ordinary, which of course is exactly as UNITA wanted it portrayed.

Perhaps, as I thought about it, Jamba was too ordinary, too pat. Everything was clean and sterile, from the hospital wards to the gun-repair shop, without a lick of personality to be found. Maybe over the tough years it's all been subjugated to the Cause, or perhaps UNITA has really taken to some sort of Zen Maoism. Or, it could be I'm just being too hard-nosed about the whole thing. Yet I still couldn't help but wonder if, after the *turistas* leave, everyone doesn't just shut off the lights and go home until the next batch arrives.

I was disabused of that notion by a chap who's worked closely with UNITA over the years, and who's spent enough time in Jamba to lust after the tourist concession after the war (UNITA is actually planning on turning Jamba into a monument of sorts, and hopes to attract tourists who have become bored with places like Cancun or Monte Carlo).

"What you see is what you get," my entrepreneurial-minded companion told me during dinner. "UNITA's about a pure an organization as I've ever seen in Africa, or elsewhere. I just hope that once they get into Luanda they can keep it up in the face of money and Mercedes."

But another journalist who's also earned frequent-stayer points at Jamba said I might be closer to the truth than I knew. "A lot of it is show-and-tell, and if you don't tell the right thing when you write it up they boot your ass out."

I look forward to the day when UNITA holds its first independence parade down the streets of Luanda. A lot of their blood, sweat and tears has wetted Angolan soil, and they deserve their time in the sun. Captain de Castro made a point of inviting us back to see it, and even said he hoped we'd be on the first flight in. I'll be interested to see if they're driving Mercedes — or riding bicycles.

But having spent 15 years in and out of Africa, I won't take odds either way. ✕

Serbian paramilitary militiamen have christened themselves "Kninjas," for Knin, seat of autonomous Serbian government of Croatia, and for the Ninja Turtles, "righters of wrongdoing" in movies. Croats and Slovenians would disagree. Photo: B. Bisson/Syigma



CRACK! Four Croatian police standing next to the makeshift barricade of tires, wire drums and spare lumber didn't go to the ground. Instead, they cast a watchful eye toward the Serbian barricades some 700 meters up the narrow road from our position.

"They've started again," the sergeant observed, stepping back into the shadow of the nearby trees.

I kept listening for the usual "thump" that accompanies the "crack" of incoming rifle fire, but heard nothing. Crack — another round whipped down the narrow,

paved road. Across the open field to our left was a row of apartment buildings.

In one apartment, on the fourth floor facing us, I could pick out a uniformed figure sitting in the window. He looked at me as I used my binoculars to return the favor. We waved to one another, as I could see no sign of any weapon. "He's ours, not to worry," one of the police said as he adjusted the sling to shift the weight of his AK.

Osijek, Yugoslavia, a Croatian town of some 100,000 people, is about a 3 1/2-hour drive from Zagreb. It, like several others, is now the scene of sporadic — and at

times vicious — fighting between Croatian and Serbian groups. The Yugoslav army (YA) is actively aiding the Serbs with weapons, training and movement of armored units in instances where the Croats seem to be getting the better of the combat situation.

About 10 kilometers southeast from Osijek is the tiny village of Tejna. Although barely large enough to be marked on a map, Tejna has been the scene of some of the most bitter fighting in Yugoslavia since the republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from the government of Yugoslavia.



CRACK-UP

IN CROATIA

"Mad Mike"

on Yugoslavian Front Lines

by Mike Williams



Yugoslav armored column advances on rebellious Croats. Photo: J. Langevin/Sygma



Masked Croatian militiaman near Zagreb armed with CIS 5.56x45 Ultimex 100 SAW, Mark III. Photo: B. Blisson/Sygma

Two of the small republics, Slovenia and Croatia, have held free elections for the first time in their history in an attempt to break away from the hard-line communist government in Belgrade, the capital of the country. Unfortunately for both tiny republics, the central government has decided to use the power of the YA to crush their attempts at democratic reform.

In order to understand the war, it's necessary to understand the ethnic groups in the country. Within Yugoslavia there are Croats, Slovenians, Serbs, Macedonians, Albanians, Montenegrins and others, each with its own language,

customs and agendas.

In addition to that complex situation, there are feuds which date back 500 years and, in some cases, are based on something

like, "Your great-great grandfather, who was a Serb, killed mine, who was a Croatian, so I'm going to even the score." In recent fighting involving Serbian



paramilitary groups against Croats, the YA, whose officer corps, including the commanding general, are 90% Serbian, has actively assisted the Serbs whenever it appeared that the Croats were winning. In a further effort to ensure Serbian victories, the YA is conducting basic infantry courses for Serbian volunteers, and supplying them with weapons, ammunition, explosives and comms equipment.

It is common for YA armor to roll up on a ridgeline overlooking a Croatian village and methodically proceed to pound the hell out of houses with the main tubes of T-62s and T-72s. The Croats have absolutely no antiarmor defense capabilities, save Molotov cocktails, and are at the mercy of the tanks, MiG-23s and Mi-8 choppers. And the situation is similar to

Serbian militiaman holds aloft his Zastava 7.92mm M76 sniping rifle at Glina. Photo: B. Bisson/Syigma



Serbian paramilitary militia train in Glina region of Croatia: man on left holds folding-stock AKM; man on right carries 7.62 PPSH submachine gun. Photo: B. Bisson/Syigma

that in Northern Ireland; neighbor fighting neighbor.

This was not unlike the scene that confronted us while we were standing at the barricades, looking down the street toward the Serb positions. A sergeant motioned for me to follow him to the small house that served as a command post. We got into our rental car and drove slowly down the road. "Don't speed up," he cautioned, "that'll cause them to open up."

The driver eased back on the accelerator with a deep sigh. Looking down the deserted street and knowing that there was a sniper with a sound-suppressed weapon watching our movements made the pucker factor jump to the top of the scale.

About 300 meters ahead of us, on the right side of the road, was a Mercedes truck. It had been hit with rocket-propelled grenades that blew off both wheels on one side. We slowed and eased past it; I had a pretty good idea of what would happen to our Japanese rental transport if the Serbs decided to crank off a couple of rounds at us.

We pulled up behind a house and parked near one of the blue and white police vehicles. "This way," the sergeant said as he crawled out of the car and started up the concrete steps to the first-floor landing. We followed him into the darkened living room, then up another flight of steps to meet the commander. The accommodations were Spartan: a table, a worn couch and several chairs were surrounded by gear; spare magazines for the AKs, radios and camo uniforms were piled in various corners.

My interpreter, Dado Desenivich, an American of Croatian descent, led me over to the table where a lean, hard-faced

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THAT ...

Someone once said, "To be an enemy of the United States is dangerous ... to be a friend is fatal." The tiny nation of Slovenia now stands an excellent chance of finding out just how true that statement is.

Here in Ljubljana, the capital of Yugoslavia, people are braced for a repeat of what happened at 0245 hours on 27 June 1991. Without warning, parts of a Yugoslav armored brigade composed of elements of the 1st and 2nd battalions of that unit rumbled out of Vrhnika for Ljubljana. The column included 40 tanks and 20 personnel carriers of Soviet and Yugoslav manufacture.

At the town of Brezovica, Slovenian Territorial Defense troops tried to stop the column using nonviolent means. The Yugoslav army tanks simply powered through the barricades, flattening them.

Although a cease-fire was signed between the Yugoslav government and the Slovenians on 28 June 1991, it has not been effective and fighting has continued. MiG-23s and MiG-29s were used in close support with the advancing Yugoslav armored columns, hurling missiles and cannon fire at civilian homes, buildings, personnel and vehicles. A total of 500 Yugoslav tanks, including T-55s, T-62s and T-72s, are now in Slovenia, some of them a 10-minute taxi drive from the capital.

What has happened to cause vicious attacks against the people of a nation smaller than the state of Rhode Island with a population of only 1,900,000?

From 1945 until 1953, the Slovenians were fairly happy under a Yugoslav communist government that, at times, varied its doctrinaire Marxism with periods of liberalization that permitted more personal freedom than was felt within the Soviet Union and other Marxist states.

After 1953, the army began a slow, but steady, move to allow a majority take-over by Serbs within its ranks. Although prior to that time there was a studied effort to make the Yugoslav army representative of the ethnic makeup of the country (including Slovenians, Croats, Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs and Montenegrins), it was felt that the Serbs would be the most reliable from a strictly party standpoint, as they were the descendants of the Chetniks, hard-line Marxists whose fanatic adherence to communist ideology was a matter of record.

Many people in Croatia and Slovenia call the Yugoslav army a foreign power, and point out that as many as 70% of its officers are Serbs (while only 40% of Yugoslavia's population are Serbs).

When the Slovenians held a na-

Continued on page 73



Running a red light in Ljubljana can be dangerous. Slovenian Special Forces troop stops suspect car during Yugoslav army attack on Slovenia. Photo: Joco Znidarsik



Neighbor against neighbor: Yugoslav army tank commander argues with Slovenian civilian near Ljubljana under watchful eye of trooper. Photo: Joco Znidarsik



Yugoslav armored column crashed through civilian roadblock, firing on vehicles in its way. Photo: Joco Znidarsik



As Yugoslav army units advance on Brnik Airport, locals gather to watch the action, reminding author of audiences at battles during American Civil War. Photo: Joco Znidarsik



Croatian of about 26 was sitting, smoking a cigarette and drinking a small cup of black, Turkish coffee. I don't know what the Turks have against the Yugoslavs, but whatever it was, they evened the score with their coffee — I could float a spoon in the stuff back in Ljubljana.

Introductions were made and the commander waved me to a seat across from him. In any army, in any part of the world, there is a command presence apparent in some officers — pick any Special Forces

team leader with combat experience, any seasoned rifle company commander, and the look is there. This commander had it aplenty.

"He welcomes you to his unit," said Desenovich.

"Thank him for letting us come," I answered. "Tell him we won't take up a lot of his time or get in the way of his operations."

After this translation, I explained about SOF and the reason we were here. The



commander's eyes lit up and he asked if I could arrange to get him a copy of the magazine.

"We'll get him some," I promised, after which I asked if he could brief us on the tactical situation.

Just as he was about to begin, the radio in the corner of the room began to crackle with incoming traffic. You didn't have to be fluent in the language to recognize the sound of concern in the operator's voice. In the background was the sound of AK fire and outside there were more incoming rounds capping off.

Village of Tejna is now split in two with neighbor fighting neighbor. Here, Croatian fighter dashes across street, also known as no-man's-land. Photo: Franco Origlia/Sygma

"They're shooting. One of the Serbs attacked the police and they shot him," Desenovich interpreted.

A small group of police ran to the lower floor and outside, looking up the road toward the Serb barricade. I got up from the table and

could now hear increased firing, this time from several different weapons that weren't using silencers.

The commanding officer walked quickly to the radio and began transmitting. "He's asking for the ambulance," Desenovich explained. Within a few minutes, a small van bearing red cross insignia raced past up the street heading for the sound of the firing.

"What's the status with the Serbs? Will they open up on the ambulance?" I asked, looking toward the unit commander. After the translation, the young officer laughed and shook his head. "Not as long as the Serbs know it's going to help one of their people."

The squeal of tires downstairs announced the return of the meat wagon and a small crowd gathered around the vehicle as it pulled into the driveway. Two attendants dressed in white jackets and pants jumped out and opened the rear door, exposing the handles of a stretcher. Without hesitating, they each grabbed the handle and pulled. The wounded Serb was conscious and began yelling that he didn't know what was wrong.

When they put him down on the ground next to the ambulance, I could see that he'd been hit three times: once above the left knee on the inside of the leg, a fairly deep flesh wound on the right side of his chest, and what appeared to be a ricochet on the inside of his right leg just above the ankle. There didn't appear to be a great deal of bleeding, and the medics did a quick and thorough job of putting compresses on the wounds. One of the police

SOF INTERVIEWS
MARIJAN MAJCNEN, YUGOSLAVIAN
CONSUL GENERAL TO AUSTRIA

SOF: Mr. Majcnen, the fighting in Yugoslavia is confusing to the vast majority of those of us in the West who are used to wars that are fairly straight-forward — the good guys versus the bad guys. What's going on in your country?

Majcnen: First of all, it is between a new republic and an old army and *not* between one part of the country and a certain element. It is *not* a civil war; a civil war is when one nation is divided within itself and one part fights another part. This is not the case in Yugoslavia. It is not an ethnic war; Slovenia isn't fighting another nation.

The problem is that the people of Slovenia on 8 April 1990 held their first free election and from that we got our first free government. But the central governmental structure didn't change. The main force in the central government originally was the Communist Party, the secret police and the army.

SOF: The same as the Soviet Union.

Majcnen: Exactly the same as the So-

viet Union. The government was set because the Slovenian people allowed it at the 14th Congress of the Communist Party. The secret police weren't strong enough to overthrow the newly elected free government, so that left the power base of the Communist Party — the army. The army was an army of the communist system.

SOF: Was the army a volunteer army?

Majcnen: Yes, but this army was really defending the communist system. Its attack on the Republic of Slovenia was not for the reason of its independence, nor for the reason of ethnic problems, but because the republic had a freely elected government and this is dangerous for the communist system. Those are the facts.

You now have additional problems in Yugoslavia — these are ethnic problems between Croats and Serbs, Albanians and Serbs, and Macedonians and Albanians. But you don't have any ethnic problems between Slovenians and any other nation. Therefore it is quite difficult to understand where the problem lies.

SOF: Is the real problem with the communist government?

Majcnen: Yes, the Communists in Belgrade will *not* give up their authority in the central system of the government in all of Yugoslavia. When the Slovenians real-

ized this — that they couldn't come up with a new agreement with the central government — they said, "We would like to be a small, independent, free country because you can't mix democracy with communism. It simply does not work."

SOF: Is there a close relationship between the secret police and the army or are there bad feelings between the two as between the KGB and the Red Army in the USSR?

Majcnen: It seems to me that there is good cooperation between the secret police and the army in Yugoslavia, even though the army has its own intelligence service. I never worked in either of those situations because I was never a member of the Communist Party.

SOF: Could you give us a personal evaluation of the key players in the Yugoslav government now? The generals, the secretary of defense, the prime minister, the president?

Majcnen: In my opinion, the most important persons are those in high positions in the army. The president of the country does not play a very important role in the country any longer.

SOF: He's a figurehead?

Majcnen: I would say so, and the same applies to the president of the assembly.

SOF: Then who is controlling both of them?

Majcnen: The army.

WHO SITS ON THE FENCE, LOSES



Author Mike Williams and M70AB2 Kalashnikov on village roadside in Yugoslavia. Photo: Mike Williams

As worldwide diplomatic machinery grinds over the problems in Yugoslavia, one fact is clear — Slovenia and Croatia are independent states with their own governments and their own economies. Delays by the West in recognizing this fact only encourages the Yugoslav military to plot a bloody campaign to destroy the newly found freedom in Slovenia and Croatia.

The only force capable of attempting to reunite the republics back into Yugoslavia — the USSR — has a track record of mindless brutality matched only by its incompetence.

This is not a situation in which the West can sit idly by, making half-hearted promises. Every day that recognition of the Slovenian and Croatian governments is delayed encourages the Yugoslav military. Every reference by the media to "rebel republics" disguises the fact that these are independent countries, not part of the old Yugoslavia.

Croatian presidential adviser Mario

Norbilo told me that the Yugoslav government must get a clear message from the West that further military action will not be acceptable. In Slovenia, officials passed on the same feelings.

There is a belief that the mainly conscript Yugoslav military will collapse in the face of local public opinion and the threat of outside intervention. The signs are already there, with desertions and reports of troops being shot by officers to prevent mutinies surfacing from time to time.

The West must get involved — if necessary, by offering defensive military aid such as anti-aircraft weapons which will be needed to defend the republics from further attack. If we sit back making vague promises and trying to hide the real issues, the people I met with will again be subject to the threat of death and suffering at the hands of the Yugoslav military machine.

— John Evans

who had fought with the Serb was scratched, punched in the face, and his shirt front was bloody.

I asked the commander why his men didn't kill the Serb instead of simply putting him down with a leg shot. He smiled and shook his head. "He says they are Croats, not Serbian terrorists, and they don't want to kill anyone unless they have to," Desenivich interpreted.

When the ambulance left with the Serb, I talked with the commander and discov-

ered that a good part of the problem was the fact that the Serbs who were fighting in this area had been neighbors for years and everyone knew everyone else. He shook his head and commented that it was senseless when both Croats and many Serbs wanted to live in peace. "It's the YA commander in Belgrade who wants to crush the Croats and Slovenians," he said.

"A good part of the problem that exists here is a direct result of the actions by the

YA. The commanding general in Belgrade doesn't want peace, he just wants to crush Croatia. It's so senseless. The YA is continually providing training for Serbian volunteers and we hear now that they've even hired mercenaries to conduct advanced courses in terrorism ... One of the mercenaries is supposed to be from the IRA in Northern Ireland."

The most serious aspect of the firefights

Continued on page 74

SOF: The generals?

Majcen: For sure.

SOF: Is the Soviet Union taking a great interest in what's going on in Yugoslavia?

Majcen: They're taking a very keen interest in what's going on in a small republic like Yugoslavia to ensure that what happens there doesn't happen in the USSR's own small republics.

SOF: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania all over again?

Majcen: Not only those three, but all over the Soviet Union. This is the real reason we don't get international recognition.

SOF: Has Mikhael Sergeevich [Gorbachev] visited Yugoslavia before?

Majcen: Yes, seems like three years ago he was in Yugoslavia, if I remember correctly. He has a deep interest in what happens here.

SOF: While fighting is going on, are there Soviet advisers with the Yugoslav army units?

Majcen: I don't think so, but I could be wrong. The Yugoslav army is a strong one; it was supported by the Western European nations and the USA because NATO felt this support would keep the Soviet Union from exerting any control over the Yugoslav military complex.

SOF: Does this date from the days of Tito?

Majcen: It really dates from 1948,

when Tito broke with Stalin; but at the same time, the two of them never stopped communicating. Today there is an extreme right-wing organization in Yugoslavia that was started by the Chetniks but influenced by Mussolini and the Nazis. It is very strong in Serbia.

SOF: In your opinion, do you believe the Yugoslav army will say, "We will crush the Slovenians and Croats and then we will talk," as the Soviet Union has done to resistance movements all over the world?

Majcen: There won't be much talk anymore. In Slovenia, our army is very small and we are only 1.9 million people: Ljubljana only has about 350,000 inhabitants, and Maripor about 100,000. If they bomb these two cities, it is enough to destroy the country.

SOF: Is there cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia in their fight for freedom from the communists?

Majcen: There is a high degree of cooperation between the two republics. But Croatia has another problem: there are about 600,000 Serbs in Croatia and with this group, the Croats are going to have a serious problem. I really don't know what they're going to do about this.

SOF: What impact have the Serbs made on the Croats' fight for independence?

Majcen: The Serbs have organized

and are actively fighting the Croatian government. While the Croats want to be free from the central government in Belgrade, the Serbs do not want to separate from the communists.

What is also interesting is that during the last three days, there was an unorganized fight against the Yugoslav army by the population of Croatia. They fought the movement of tanks against Slovenian borders with stones and Molotov cocktails. But don't forget there were already 500 tanks in Slovenia with more coming. And Slovenia is smaller than the State of Rhode Island.

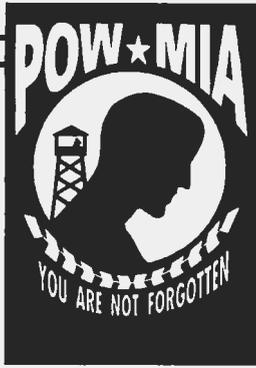
SOF: Very brave people to take on T-72s with Molotov cocktails.

Majcen: Brave indeed. But I want to tell you the compliment we got from an Austrian army colonel because he expected a flood of people running away from Slovenia, coming to Austria asking for political asylum. So far, not one single Slovenian has crossed over into Austria. Not one. Also, there are Slovenians coming from as far away as Argentina to fight.

SOF: What do you think is going to happen in Slovenia and Croatia?

Majcen: The decision to attack both republics lies in the hands of the Yugoslav army commander — all he has to do is issue the order. We can't stop him, but we will fight to preserve our freedom.

— M.W.



POW

POW/MIA Scams Cloud t

Gerard Calla has been involved in POW/MIA operations/investigations both as a military man and as a civilian. In 1965, he led the first POW/MIA rescue operation to recover Capt. William Eisenbraun (one of Robert K. Brown's classmates at the Infantry Officer's Advanced Course, Ft. Benning, Georgia). The rescue was unsuccessful, and Eisenbraun was later reported to have been executed. Calla has also been involved in more than 200 POW combat recovery operations from 1965 to 1973, as well as hundreds of POW/MIA investigations. These operations led to the successful recovery of 30 sets of American skeletal remains. Since 1973, Calla has conducted investigations of the POW/MIA issue under the auspices of a private foundation. He is a highly decorated Vietnam War vet, and speaks fluent Lao and Vietnamese. — RKB

ONCE again the specter of American servicemen still held captive in Southeast Asia has resurfaced. Like a virus in the body politic of America, this issue never goes away, but lies dormant until new findings and accusations trigger its eruption, bringing the trauma and tragedy of the Vietnam War again bubbling to the surface.

Recently, several individuals and organizations have forced open the POW/MIA issue with "live-sighting" reports and as yet unseen photographs. The vigor with which they speak and the gut-wrenching implications of their evidence has sent shock waves throughout the country.

The plight of American servicemen still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia is being exploited by many diverse interests, each with its own agenda; but as a whole, they lack direction and leadership. Their agendas include political power, monetary gain, job security, publicity, or simply a cause to embrace.

Unfortunately, all are being guided by emotionalism with complete disregard for the facts.

(The objective here is not to reject the possibility that U.S. servicemen are still being held against their will in Southeast Asia — indeed they may. But it is imperative that conclusions be drawn from facts, not wishful thinking. Lack of knowledge does not grant any individual or group license to create fantasy.)

Since the first American was captured in Southeast Asia, POW/MIA scams have surfaced by the thousands. In 1966, it appeared that a large group of Vietnamese were attempting to exploit the POW issue for monetary gain. After careful study, it was determined that money was not the main focus of the scam artists, but rather to tie up American military assets.

Realizing that prisoner recovery was the highest priority of the U.S. military, the National Liberation Front Intelligence (NLF) and the intelligence arm of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) established a large network of well-trained agents to involve U.S. forces in POW recovery efforts.

Good Cop — Bad Cop

The typical scam always had the same cast of motley characters, but with different faces. The plot went something like this: Someone would contact U.S. Military Intelligence (MI) claiming to have a relative in charge of American prisoners. The relative would offer to defect with the prisoners for X number of dollars and a safe haven.

A dog tag or name from a uniform normally was thrown in to establish credibility. Names of POW/MIAs were obtained from casualty lists by Vietnamese employees working in every U.S. Army of the Republic of Vietnam (USARV) and Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) port in Vietnam. Names also were obtained from

bar girls and prostitutes, who often knew about casualties before Americans (which made for some interesting spelling on dog tags and name tapes — "Fallon" turned into "Phaylawn," for example).

The cast often would consist of an interpreter, a "bad guy" who disagreed with everything and wanted more money, and a mediator who would control the "bad guy" and drag the scam out for as long as possible. This is a variation of the classic "Mut and Jeff" routine, or the "good cop — bad cop" scenario, designed to make U.S. intelligence officers believe that the mediator was on their side, when in fact the whole thing was a charade.

Upon receiving reports, U.S. intelligence would alert combat units and draw up plans for a rescue mission. Battalions (and occasionally divisions) would be committed to fruitless POW/MIA operations only to find "prisoners" had been moved just prior to the arrival of American troops.

This scenario must sound familiar to the hundreds of MI types who went through this drill in Vietnam, as I did. It is essentially the same scam recently employed in the Robertson/Lundy/Stevens photograph.

An Obvious Hoax

The individuals who released photos of Robertson/Lundy/Stevens stated that they obtained several photos from Soviet magazines at the Soviet Institute in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The perpetrators also revealed that their motive was money.

The photos were retouched, as with the Robertson/Lundy/Stevens photo (which originally showed four Soviets holding what appeared to be two captured trophy weapons). The sign with the words "Photo LD 25-5-1990, NNTK, KBC 19" was added to cover the top of one man, and a black box was sloppily airbrushed on the

MIA

by Gerard Calla

The Issue of Americans Missing in Asia

lower portion of the picture.

It should be noted that while initial scams were conducted by Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) intelligence operatives with military objectives, the primary motivation of POW/MIA scams for the past eight years has simply been money.

The Robertson/Lundy/Stevens photo was a hoax, as first reported by Chuck Fremont in SOF ("Anatomy of a Scam," October '91). Yet the purported experts at the Department of Defense (DoD) and the State Department failed to recognize this and release the facts immediately. After an emotional identification by the families of Robertson/Lundy/Stevens, the national news media was inundated with POW/MIA speculation and new photographs.

Cambodian Con Men

These pictures are, in fact, scams being run by the same group of low-level officials working in the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Cambodian chiefly responsible for this latest fraud is Som Boun Thoar. His partner in crime is a fellow by the name of Sha Thing. (These men were located in mid-August by U.S. personnel in Cambodia investigating POW/MIA photos.)

These con men were not representing the Cambodian government, and in the process of running their scam, drew much unfavorable attention from their senior comrades. This was not a wise thing to do, considering how much the Cambodian government wants to establish relations

"Missing American" on left, allegedly with son and father-in-law in Laos, is actually a volunteer worker. There are nearly 250 Mennonites, many escorted by armed guards, working on various humanitarian projects in Laos. Photo: AP



with the United States. (It is not unreasonable to assume that these men may soon become MIAs themselves.)

One of the pictures they supplied is that

of a Caucasian looking at the ground. This picture, taken from a Soviet magazine, actually depicts a Soviet baker at the South Pole looking at five loaves of bread.

Another photo of purported POW/MIAs shows five Caucasians wearing hard hats in front of a building with a sign that has been identified to be the symbol of the Latvian Liberation Army. Hardly POW/MIAs.

A photo supposedly depicting Navy Lieutenant Daniel Borah Jr. with his Laotian guard has now been identified as a H'mong hill tribesman with a Laotian. The H'mong are a nomadic people, and their origins from the steppes of the Soviet Union to Mongolia have given them a diverse gene pool; they are classified as Caucasian, as opposed to Oriental or Mon-Khmer, which accounts for the differences between "guard and prisoner."

Another photo depicts a bearded Caucasian standing with what was identified as his Laotian child and father-in-law.

The shot actually depicts a volunteer worker on the Plain of Jars in Laos. In Laos, there have been many live-sightings of bearded and long-haired Caucasians under armed escort moving across the Plain of Jars. Sound like POWs?

There may be another explanation: Approximately 250 Mennonites are performing humanitarian work projects throughout Laos. Mennonites occasionally move from one area to the other, often wearing semi-native garb. They are often young men with beards, and women with long hair. The armed guards are to protect them from "bandits" and angry villagers who were bombed during the war.



One of the most confusing agendas is the American rush to normalize relations with Vietnam, establish relations with Cambodia, and upgrade relations with Laos. These efforts appear to be in the interests of the U.S. government and American businesses.

The communist regimes of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia desperately want aid from the United States now that the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have faded from the picture. The U.S. government is receiving a tremendous amount of pressure from the private sector to normalize relations with these countries because of cheap labor and abundant natural resources there.

On the reverse side, the governments of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos want American aid to prop up their bankrupt economies and maintain their hold on power. But normalizing relations with these regimes would not help the peasant rice farmer any more than our "normalized relations" with Bulgaria helped the Bulgarian people over the past years. Normalized relations with these states would only provide recognition and give credibility to illegal and oppressive regimes.

"Road Map" is the name of a plan devised by the U.S. State Department to facilitate the normalization of relations with Vietnam, providing certain conditions are met. One of the conditions is for the Vietnamese to completely withdraw from Cambodia; another is for a genuine move toward the resolution of the POW/MIA question.

Supporting Road Map is the Inter-Agency Group (IAG). The IAG consists of a representative from the State Department, Kenneth Quinn, who is Assistant Secretary of State for Southeast Asia; a representative from the DoD, Carl Ford Jr.; a representative from the National Security Council (NSC), Peter Watson; and Ann Mills-Griffith, the representative from the League of Families (the league is composed of relatives of POW/MIAs in Southeast Asia — its goals are to ensure the POW/MIA issue is satisfactorily resolved).

To facilitate Road Map, a U.S. POW/

MIA resolution office has been established in Hanoi. The office has four American and an increasing number of Vietnamese employees. The mission of the office is to research Vietnamese war archives, extract pertinent data, and immediately act upon information.

Throwing Uncle Sam A Bone

The parameters of operation in searching for POW/MIAs is supposed to include "unrestricted access to anyone and anyplace in Vietnam." If the archives revealed that the NVA 303 Regiment's files showed a UH-1D helicopter shot down in Quang Ngai Province just west of Duc Pho in 1968, the American team (without knowledge of the Vietnamese) would board a Black Hawk helicopter at Gia Long airport and fly immediately to that area.

Once in the area, members of the team would interview untainted and unsupervised sources, and be led to the crash site. In their dreams. What has not been said is that the primary research of the archives is being carried out by Vietnamese-trained archivists, who also happen to be part of Vietnamese intelligence, and can feed the U.S. staff any information or misinformation they wish, as directed by the Vietnamese government. Furthermore, air traffic control and "safety regulations" preclude helicopters from flying over much of Vietnam.

In conjunction with the Hanoi office, the United States also is training several Vietnamese at the Central Identification Laboratory - Hawaii (CIL-HI), ("Digging Up the MIA Scandal," July '86 and "MIA Lab Scandal Continues," December '86). The lab's commander, who has been in this position for seven years, has produced very little, yet the U.S. Army has left him in this cushy Hawaiian paradise. This raises the question of why the unproductive Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) commander, also based in Hawaii, has been in his position for 12 years.

Through testimony before Congress of a

It has been well-documented that the Vietnamese have been warehousing skeletal remains of some unaccounted-for Americans.

high-ranking North Vietnamese defector (of Chinese descent) known only as "the Mortician," and others, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reports and forensic studies, it has been well-documented that the Vietnamese have been warehousing skeletal remains of some unaccounted-for American servicemen in Southeast Asia. Their remains have been returned to the U.S. on occasions when the Vietnamese government was seeking to curry favors.

Many of the 12 sets of bones given to CIL-HI had coats of preservatives applied at regular intervals. Thus, by counting the coats of preservatives, it could be determined how long the remains had been warehoused. At the time, the Vietnamese did not know we had the technology to uncover their storage and parcelling out of human remains.

Bones For Bucks

The U.S. government has deliberately chosen to remain silent with this information so as not to embarrass the Vietnamese government. It is the intent of several people in the Bush administration to normalize relations with Vietnam and, consequently, they will balk at releasing any information that may impede such plans.

CIL-HI is now instructing its Vietnamese trainees in the most modern forensic techniques. With this knowledge, the Vietnamese will be much better equipped to cover up their unsavory practices of mothballing the remains of American servicemen, and periodically trading bones for bucks.

As reported previously in SOF, there are a number of stay-behinds in Vietnam, probably numbering between 10 and 25, 22 of whom were described by the DoD as AWOL/deserters. Former soldier Larry Humphries, Clyde McKay (SOF, June '88), or McKinley Nolan, reported to be half of the famed "salt and pepper" team that actually led VC soldiers in combat against U.S. Marines in I Corps, are among them. Nolan (who is black) is now reported to be living in northeastern Cambodia. The "salt" (Caucasian) part of the team was killed by Marines in a firefight in 1968.

Enter The Twilight Zones

During the war, hundreds of military personnel went AWOL in Southeast Asia. Some returned after a couple of days of R & R; others were policed up by the authorities; some disappeared into various "twilight zones." The latter were areas in all of the large cities of South Vietnam that had a large American presence — places such as Da Nang, Can Tho, Cam Ranh,



Nashville Circuit Court Judge Hamilton Gayden says man on right is Navy Lt. Daniel Borah Jr., who has been missing in action since 1972. Unfortunately, it isn't Borah, but rather a H'mong hill tribesman. Photo: AP

Phu Bai and Saigon.

These neighborhoods usually had many alleys and thousands of people living within a few square blocks. They were organized and had their own alarm and self-defense systems. MPs trying to enter these areas usually were repulsed with overwhelming firepower. Authorities were reluctant to return fire because of civilians in the area. And, it was thought that inhabitants of these twilight zones were passing sensitive information to the VC.

Infiltration of several MI agents into these areas proved otherwise, however. A tremendous amount of black marketing and drug dealing were going on (an M16 could be purchased for as little as \$2), but no indications of espionage were ever found.

When it was finally determined that South Vietnam was about to fall, radio

stations throughout the South began broadcasting messages to AWOL/deserters in the twilight zones offering a way out. In English broadcasts, they were instructed to report to Tan Son Nhut airport, where they could board aircraft that would fly them back to the States.

Two days before Saigon fell, as many as 268 AWOL/deserters were flown out and processed through the Oakland Army Terminal, given a general discharge, and released from the military. The remaining 22 personnel that remained in Vietnam consisted of eight soldiers, two sailors, 11 Marines, and one civilian. They are still carried as AWOL/deserters.

SOF has access to 16 names of AWOL/deserters, but for legal reasons, cannot publish them. (Indeed, with the U.S. government's less-than-accurate track record of identifying POW/MIA remains, the spelling of some names could be incorrect, which could lead to further legal

problems.)

All these men carried labels in Southeast Asia as AWOL/deserters, and all are still unaccounted for, as best we know. Do they explain many of the live-sighting reports?

SOF brought out the fact several months ago that as many as eight stay-behinds wanted to come home. It is my belief that some are from the group of AWOL/deserters, and that the Vietnamese government will stage an exodus in such a manner so that the U.S. POW/MIA office in Hanoi will be given credit for "discovering" these men and bringing them out.

"No Live Americans"

This will provide the Vietnamese government with a milestone on the Road Map plan. The American office in Hanoi



was initially set up for three months. If no headway were made, the office would be pulled out. If progress could be verified, the office would be made semi-permanent after one year and normalization of relations would be almost automatic after two years.

The government of Vietnam has always said that there were "no live Americans being held against their will in Vietnam, and no live Americans in Vietnam in areas that the government controlled." This allows them an "out" if live Americans were to come out of the highlands or the U-Minh forest, or better still, out of Cambodia or Laos, which are "sovereign nations," where the Vietnamese government can disavow control.

There were (and as far as we know, still

"POW/MIA" on left turned out to be a Soviet baker on the South Pole. Photo on right, from a Soviet magazine, tells "the rest of the story." Several scams are being run by a group of low-level officials at the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Photos: AP, taken from NBC television

are) approximately 100 American citizens in jails throughout Vietnam. These people were swallowed up by Vietnam's criminal justice system. They were people who were caught smuggling, returned to Southeast Asia to find a girlfriend left behind at the end of the war, or violated Vietnam's coastal waters (an offense punishable by five years in prison).

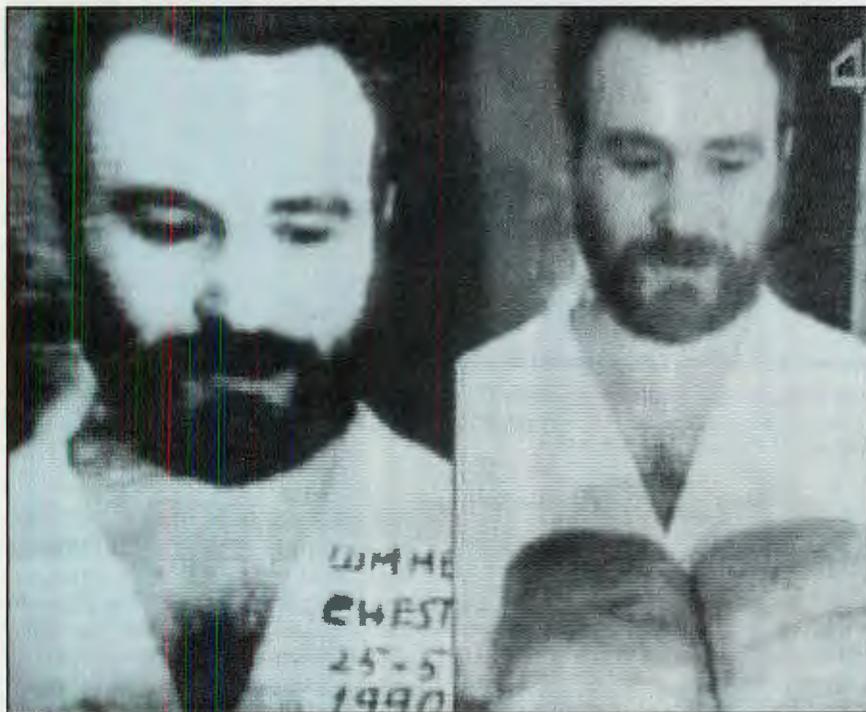
From time to time, these people have been sighted in jails or work farms throughout Vietnam, and immediately presumed to be American POWs — some have even passed notes to journalists saying they were POWs.

Again, this type of contact has led to "live-sighting reports." Thus, we have Mennonites, judicial prisoners, stay-behinds, former French colonists and a large Soviet presence all attributing to reports of live POW/MIA sightings.

It was soon discovered by Vietnamese "boat people" that the mention of American POW sightings granted special privileges to the source. Anyone claiming to have knowledge of missing American servicemen was immediately taken out of the camps and interviewed by the DIA, put up in good billeting, given good food, and often, if reports were thought to be true, flown to the United States for further debriefing. (This practice was discontinued with the more effective briefing procedures of the Stony Beach Operation, discussed below.)

Thus, a flood of reports in refugee camps in Thailand and elsewhere materialized. Codenames for indigenous Studies and Observations Group (SOG) personnel operating in North Vietnam during the war slipped into refugee communities.

Consequently, locally recruited, 10-man SOG teams, which infiltrated into North Vietnam, later became 100-man teams in the refugee community. All claimed to have information on live American POWs. During the war, indigenous people (Tai Deu-black, Tai Dau-red, Tai Trang-white, Ngan, Nung, H'mong, etc.) were inserted deep into North Vietnam and other areas



There are some
200 crash sites in Laos
to be investigated.

The IAG members visit Laos and are made promises; their operatives go into the field and receive nothing.

controlled by the NVA on long-term reconnaissance missions. Only three of these people proved to be SOG team members captured in North Vietnam and released 20 years later.

Pathet Lao Shakedown

Laotians also have their own agenda, and the ruling Pathet Lao (PL) realize that without American support, they cannot remain in power. The PL, made up primarily of lowland Lao, comprise less than half of the population of Laos. Hill tribesmen, primarily the H'mong, make up the majority, although there are almost no H'mong in the PL government.

The IAG, which appears to be enamored with the PL, has stated on-the-record that they are receiving 100% cooperation from the PL. Field operatives from JCRC and Project Stony Beach deny this, and state that they are lucky to receive 10% cooperation from the PL.

Stony Beach is a project that operates out of the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok; it sends intelligence operatives into refugee camps and interviews refugees throughout Southeast Asia. Interviews conducted by Stony Beach are focused on live-sighting reports by people who have recently departed from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Stony Beach is only authorized to interview people who are considered to be legitimate refugees, thus depriving them of a lucrative source of information on the resistance movements of Southeast Asia.

One would assume that projects such as this had been underway since 1973. This has not been the case. The hard, cold truth of the matter is that the U.S. government has had no real interest in implementing the concept of Stony Beach and, consequently, many years went by before it was pushed into it.

An example of the deliberate stonewalling by the PL is as follows: In 1989, a joint project called for the investigation of 10 crash sites; only two crash-site investigations were conducted. In 1990, 11 sites were to be visited; only one was excavated. No remains were discovered.

Officials of the PL have concocted myriad flimsy excuses for delaying and canceling investigations of crash sites — it is either too hot, too cold, raining too hard, not raining hard enough, they cannot



Col. Millard Peck being sworn in before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee to answer questions on U.S. government ineptitude regarding POW/MIAs. Photo: courtesy *Washington Times*

disturb local villagers observing fictitious religious holidays ... the list goes on.

The straight truth is that the PL government has deliberately and consistently misled, lied to, conned, taken advantage of, and thrown the full spectrum of deception at every effort the U.S. government has made to investigate crash-sites in Laos. The IAG members visit Laos and are made promises; their operatives go into the field and receive nothing.

Uncle Sam Foots The Bill

The PL government blackmailed the U.S. government into building it a new school. The rationale given by the PL for this blatant extortion was that such a gesture would help mollify the locals, who still had animosity toward the Americans as a result of the war.

When a survey team went to the area it discovered two Mennonite schools already constructed; the Laotians insisted on a third school, larger and better. The U.S. government approved the funds, flew a U.S. Army Engineer team into the area, and constructed a "bigger and better" school.

The cost to American taxpayers for this

was in excess of \$500,000 (\$138,000 for the initial survey; \$280,000 for construction of the school; transportation and TDY for U.S. Army engineers was another \$150,000). What was recovered at the crash site? *Nada!* Also, one of the survey teams and one of America's most experienced POW hunters were threatened with a permanent ban from Laos because they asked "too many questions of the locals" at the crash site.

At another site, a team was only allowed in the area for two days because of some bogus religious holiday. The team was told it would have to wrap up its operation after thousands of dollars were spent because they would offend the local population by being in the area on a holiday (a holiday even the locals had never heard of).

The U.S. government purchased five jeeps for its PL POW/MIA counterpart team. When asked by the U.S. government to use these vehicles for a crash site investigation, the Laotians said the vehicles had been given to high-ranking PL officials for personal transportation.

The American *chargé* of the third school was shaken down again when the PL informed them that the U.S. team must rent a PL helicopter at an outrageous cost to visit a crash site.

In addition, they were asked by the PL to provide spare parts, then told that the helicopter must stay with the team at a higher rent because of "bandits" in the area. The real bandits in Laos are the PL goons in Vientiane, conning the IAG and holding up the U.S. government.

NVA Took POWs In Laos

Of the 528 U.S. personnel lost in Laos, 85% (or 449 men) were downed in areas totally controlled by the NVA. One must remember that major portions of the Ho Chi Minh Trail (the main supply route of the NVA into South Vietnam) went through eastern Laos. Even though the NVA were operating on Laotian soil, there is no question that they were in control, and were the ones who took charge of captured American airmen, despite recent statements made by the Vietnamese that all Americans downed in Laos came under PL control and therefore must be accounted for by the PL.

Continued on page 76

BLOODY, BE

Although reporting on what is happening to the Kurdish Resistance in Iraq has been reduced to 10-second "updates" in the electronic media and murky "sitreps" in print media, we at SOF are not so quick to abandon those fighting against tyranny.

For this reason, we sent veteran combat photojournalist Peter Douglas to the front lines in Iraqi Kurdistan to give our readers an eyewitness account of what is going on in this continuing, bloody struggle.

Kurdistan is in a strategic part of the world, and the people who live there are continuing their fight against Saddam — unlike the U.S., which left the Middle East satisfied his breathing body was still in power.

With much of the Iraqi army (still) intact and (still) bent on crushing the Kurds, we knew this would be a dangerous assignment for Douglas. Indeed, while he was reporting for us in Kuwait last month (see "Kuwait's Alamo," October '91), a three-man BBC crew was killed in the same area where we were sending him.

Fortunately, Douglas returned from Kurdistan in good health. What follows is the first in a two-part report he filed from the region.

Helmet and knocked-out BTR-60s on mountain road in Zargos Mountains are relics of successful Kurdish Resistance ambush at Chory Pass.

AUTIFUL KURDISTAN

**SOF in the Mountains With the
Kurdish Resistance**

Text & Photos by Peter Douglas



When hidden in positions along ridge lines among boulders and crevices, Kurdish Resistance fighters can make themselves almost impervious to Iraqi artillery barrages.

PERCHED confidently in the cupola of the lead tank, the Iraqi tank commander displayed little concern for any guerrilla threat. Resistance had been swept aside during the rapid Iraqi advance over the flat terrain of the plains. Pockets of Kurds had been pinpointed by helicopter gunships and pestered with artillery.

After the recent Iraqi reverses at the hands of the Coalition offensive to liberate Kuwait, the tank commander felt good to be in the vanguard of the Iraqi offensive to crush the rebellious Kurds in northern Iraq. Such overconfidence was a mistake, particularly as the armored column began to creep up into the foothills of the Zargos Mountains, traditional stronghold of the Kurdish Pesh Merga.

The name Pesh Merga, meaning "those who face death," couldn't have been more appropriate for the small band of men who crouched behind boulders high above the road and watched the armored column creep closer. They were men of the KDP (Kurdish Democratic Party) faction, and their leader, Masud Barzani, was with them. He had little hope of stopping the Iraqi advance, but was determined to give it a bloody nose and delay it enough to give the civilian population of the area time to escape.

The news was all bad. The Iraqis were rolling up the Resistance on all fronts. Only after TV screens worldwide were flooded with images of the suffering of three million Kurds fleeing to the mountains did the outside world begin to understand the scale of the tragedy taking place in Iraqi

Kurdistan.

With only 40 men it was crucial not to mess up the timing of the ambush. Further down the ridge, men armed with rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs) waited for Masud's signal. As the lead tank entered the narrows of the Chory Pass, where the ridges pinch tight against the road, Masud triggered the ambush.

tank's interior. He slammed the cupola hatch down and sealed himself inside as the first RPG round hit the engine compartment. With flames leaping from the engine, the tank swerved and crashed into the earth bank to the left of the road.

As the flames spread, the crew desperately tried to scramble clear despite the small arms fire. Only the driver made it; he bounded down the road, his clothes ablaze.

Behind the lead tank a BMP-1 armored personnel carrier slithered to a stop, after two hits on the right side which blew off several road wheels, leaving the track in place. The BMP-1 burst into flames and incinerated the crew. Next to it, an MT-LB multipurpose tracked vehicle met a similar fate. Soldiers scrambled from trucks and took to their heels, panic overriding military discipline. The road seemed to be a solid line of blazing armor, through which the Iraqi army ran pell-mell back the way they had come.

Successful Ambush

The unexpected resistance had caught the Iraqis unprepared. As the ambush site was well-chosen, and the ambush well-timed, Iraqi casualties were out of all proportion to the size of the small opposing force they faced. The results encouraged other Pesh Merga units, and they began to filter down from the mountains to join Masud.

The Iraqi army continued the battle, but relied on their artillery (which had been so effective down in the plains) to dislodge the Pesh Merga. Positioned along the ridge lines, among boulders and crevices, the Pesh Merga proved to be almost impervious to the barrages directed at them.

With the arrival of a Coalition intervention force in northwestern Kurdistan to



After entering Kurdistan the author traveled east to the small towns of Mergah Sur, Di'ana, Sardawe and finally Shaqlawah searching for Pesh Merga leader, Masud Barzani.

KURDISH RELIGION

A diversity of religions originally competed within Kurdistan: tree and solar cults, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians. As a result of the Islamic conquests of the 7th Century AD, most Kurds are now Sunni Moslems, adhering to the Shafi'i school of Islamic law, one of the four schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence. Sunni Moslems do not display the religious fanaticism of Shi'ism as in Iran.

Not all Kurds are Sunni Moslem. In northwest Anatolia (Turkey) a few Kurds are Alevis, followers of an unorthodox branch of Shi'ism. An even smaller number are Ahl al-Haqq (People of the Truth), another extreme Shi'ite deviation.

A minority of Kurds cling to religions other than Islam among which are counted the Suriani (Christians) and the Yazidis (universally considered by other Kurds to be devil worshippers).

Yazidism has absorbed elements from all the other regional religions, resulting in a synthetic religion which owes much to Paganism, Judaism (avoidance of certain foods), Christianity (wine drinking, baptism) and Islam (sacrifice, fasting and pilgrimage) but most to Zoroastrianism (the original pre-Islamic religion of the Kurds). Along with the Christians they have endured, not surprisingly, great persecution by the Moslems of the region. They revere *Shaitan* (Satan) as the Fallen Angel and feel he must be neutralized by soothing gestures as, in time, he will be restored to the celestial hierarchy. In order not to antagonize *Shaitan* they are prohibited from mentioning his name or any word beginning with "Sh." They therefore refer to him as the "Peacock Angel" or "Peacock King" as it is felt that "peacock" is the word least sounding like *Shaitan*. They also avoid eating lettuce, or mentioning it, as a legend exists that when originally hiding from God, *Shaitan* hid in a lettuce patch. Their holiest shrine is in Sheikh Adi, in the hills near Mosul.

Irrespective of religion there is, in addition, widespread belief in many parts of Kurdistan that *Djinn* (magical spirits) and evil spirits inhabit every cave, mountains have dwarves, and wells contain elves. Ruins and bridges are also thought to contain resident *Djinn*. *Nazar Bonuk*, charms made of blue glass in the shape of an eye, are used to ward off the evil eye.

— P.D.

A burst of small arms fire ricocheted off the heavy metal turret of the lead tank, injuring the tank commander perched in the cupola. The commander dropped into the turret, seeking the illusory safety of the



Victorious Pesh Merga overlook traffic and destroyed armor from their positions high above Chory Pass.

establish a safe haven for the Kurds, Saddam's army ceased hostilities out of fear that the Coalition forces might side with the Pesh Merga. As a result, Chory Pass became a part of the front line dividing the Kurds from the Iraqi army.

The Kurdish tragedy is not a recent phenomenon; it is ongoing and has been acted out mostly unseen and unheard — and not only in Iraq. Kurdistan encompasses an area roughly the size of France and is inhabited by some 25 million Kurds. They represent the largest nation on earth without a country — four times as numerous as the Palestinians, whose terrorist activities have ensured that everyone has heard of them.

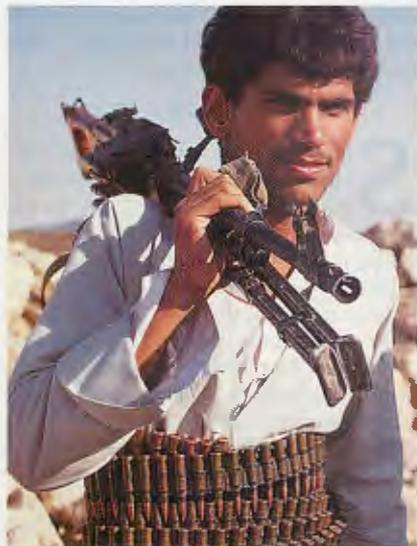
My entry into Kurdistan was from Turkey to Zaku on Iraq's northwestern border. It was in this region that U.S. troops established their very welcome presence. Refugee camps had been set up

a few kilometers out of town to cater to the Kurds coming off the mountain, but Zaku was overflowing with refugees seeking food, information and looking for work.

United States Army patrols cruised the streets in Humvees ensuring the peace, and U.S. military police were stationed outside the local police station. Although detailed to protect the Kurdish population from the Iraqis, these particular American MPs had eventually been forced to intervene to protect the Iraqis from the wrath of the local Kurds. (On several occasions, the Kurds had attempted to burn down the Iraqi police station with Iraqi police still in it.)

Searching For Masud

My assignment was to head off way beyond the security of the Coalition zone to locate and interview Masud Barzani, charismatic leader of the KDP. Arriving in Zaku at dusk, I had just enough time to



Pesh Merga fighter armed with GPMG mans ridgeline position above Arbil road.

WHO'S WHO IN KURDISTAN

There are six principle Pesh Merga factions, of which the KDP and the PUK are the largest. The PUK leadership were once members of the KDP who broke away in 1975 to form their own separate faction. The Baghdad regime has exploited differences between Kurdish factions in order to set them against one other. While this tactic has had some success in the past, all six parties have, at present, set aside their differences and united in opposition to Baghdad.

These parties are: Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), Party of United Kurdistan (PUK), Kurdistan Socialist Party (KSP), Socialist Party for Kurdish People (SPKP), Kurdistan People's Democratic Party (KPDP), The Worker's Party (Communist) (WP).

— P.D.

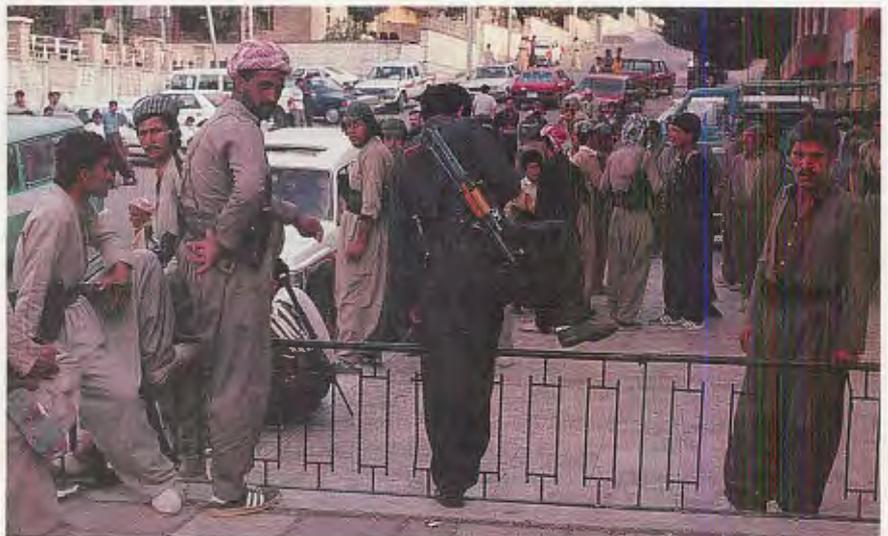
make contact with the local KDP office to confirm my destination (Sardawe) and request an escort and guide for the long drive the next day. That done, it was time to bunk down for the night.

Top-line Zaku hotels begin way below no-star rating. A cursory inspection of their various, dubious delights led me to the least offensive one: The Baghdad. Given the massive influx of refugees, I was pleased to find a room — any room. Sound advice for travelers in warm climes is never check into a top-floor room with a tin roof, on the side warmed by the sun all day. My night was spent in sweaty discomfort, sweltering in the oven-like heat and gazing at the electric fan without electricity. Instead of electricity, two thick blankets had been boastfully supplied with the "air-conditioned" room.

Into the Battlefields

Relieved to escape its decrepit charms,

As the terms of treaty with Baghdad were being thrashed out between all Kurdish factions, the town of Shaqlawah was jammed with Pesh Merga from all over Kurdistan.



KURDISH AGONY

The current Kurdish uprising began on 11 September 1961 under the leadership of General Mustapha Barzani. In 1963, the Kurds were subjected to a coordinated attack by Iraqi and Turkish military. This warfare continued until 1971, when the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad promulgated what became known as the "March 11th Peace Manifesto," a 14-point program that allowed for Kurdish autonomy within Iraq.

However, since 60% of Iraq's oil came from the Kirkuk area of Kurdistan, control of the oilfields in this area was always a subject of contention. In 1972, the Ba'ath party signed a friendship treaty with the Soviets and confidence was high. By 1974, with the rise in oil prices, the Iraqi government had reneged on their 1971 agreement for Kurdish autonomy and fighting broke out once again in Kurdistan.

The Shah of Iran, Israel and the CIA (the latter concerned about the regional effect of the new Soviet-Iraq alliance) supported the Kurds with arms. As a result, by March of 1975, the Iraqi army had suffered severe reverses at the hands of the Kurdish guerrillas, who were advancing on Baghdad. The regime saved itself by ceding to Iran, in the Algiers Agreement of March 1975, territory around the strategically important Shatt al' Arab waterway in exchange for an end to all aid to the Kurds.

The Algiers Agreement destroyed Kurdish hopes of continuing the war to an advantageous end. The Shah of Iran cut all aid and sealed the border to deny the Kurds an escape route from Iraqi army counterattacks.

With their lines of supply strangled, the Kurds were rolled back into the mountains. They were unable to protect the millions of Kurdish civilians under their control and were forced to order the civilian population to surrender to the Iraqis. Some Pesh Merga continued the struggle in the form of a guerrilla war in the mountains. Their leader, Mustapha Barzani, died of cancer in exile in the United States in 1979. Two of his sons, Idris and Masud, took over the KDP leadership. In 1980, Iraq launched an invasion of Iran (then under Ayatollah Khomeini), to regain territory ceded to the Shah. Suddenly, the Iraqi Kurds found Iran willing to reopen the arms pipeline. The United States, however, then supported Saddam against what was considered the more dangerous enemy, the Islamic government that had toppled the Shah of Iran. However, at the same time that Iran supported the Iraqi Kurds in their struggle for autonomy, they simultaneously used their own army to suppress any notions Iranian Kurds might have held for autonomy within Iranian Kurdistan.

With an abundance of arms, the Iraqi Kurds quickly gained ground against Saddam's army and "liberated" large areas of Kurdistan along both the Iranian and Turkish borders. The Iran-Iraq War saw Kurds fighting each other as both Iran and Iraq armed the Kurds of the other state to tie down numbers of the opposing regular army troops. In 1987, Iraq had two of its seven armies committed to mountain warfare inside Iraq against the Kurds. The Iraqi Kurds were able to hold on to their gains for the duration of the Iran-Iraq War despite Saddam's use of chemical weapons against them. The most notorious incident was the March 1988 attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja, where 5,000 civilians were killed.

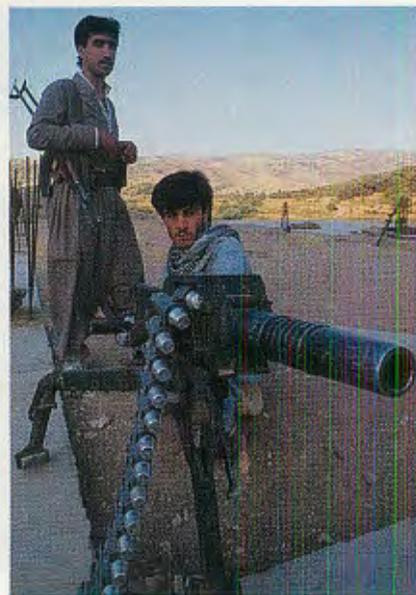
In July of 1988, Iran agreed to accept U.N. Security Council Resolution 598, and by August of that year, the cease-fire ending the Iran-Iraq War had been agreed upon. Saddam was now free to turn the full might of his army upon the Kurds. He decided to rid Iraq once and for all of its Kurdish problem and repopulate Kurdistan with Arabs.

With the loss of Iranian support, the Iraqi Pesh Merga began to lose ground to Iraqi military offensives, which again included extensive use of chemical weapons against civilian targets. The U.N. Security Council responded by passing Resolution 620 which called for "appropriate and effective measures" if Saddam continued to use poison gas. Saddam did so within 48 hours of the resolution being passed. There was no U.N. response.

In August 1990, the Kurds were allowed a short breathing space when most of Iraq's troops were first committed to the invasion of Kuwait, and then later moved to face the developing, U.S.-led Coalition threat. However, after the Iraqi army was soundly beaten by the Coalition counterattack to liberate Kuwait, the Kurds and the Iraqi Shi'ite minority in the south rose up in rebellion.

Initially, the Iraqi army suffered reverses at the hands of these lightly armed guerrilla forces, but after the cease-fire, counter to the agreement, Iraq deployed helicopter gunships and aircraft for air strikes. Faced with the full onslaught of the Iraqi army, and the failure of the Coalition to lend any support, both uprisings are being brutally crushed.

— P.D.



In Chory Pass action, Kurds destroyed or captured Iraqi armor and artillery, including this AGS-17 grenade launcher.

oak forests. Extensive defoliant operations were conducted by the Iraqis on the remaining forests to deny cover to the Pesh Merga. Now, the ancient forests are gone; only scrub oaks remain.

Having left the fertile border valley in which Zakhu lies, driving past extensive fields of ripe wheat, I began to appreciate the scale of the Kurdish tragedy. Mile after mile, hour after hour as we drove along, we passed the remains of destroyed villages. Not the random destruction of natural calamity, but the total and systematic destruction of man.

Having forcibly removed the civilian population in a series of progressively more brutal operations codenamed "An Fal," the Iraqi army dynamited the villages and bulldozed the remains. In many places, all trace of the village dwellings had vanished; only the derelict terraced fields, themselves decayed and overgrown, betrayed the site of a lost village. An estimated 4,000 villages have been destroyed in Kurdistan.

BBC Journalists: KIA

Since leaving the French military checkpoint at Rashawah, the last in the Coalition security zone, we had not passed another living soul. From our position we could see, stretching for miles in either direction, a long valley totally devoid of human life. Breaking down was not an appealing thought. A three-man BBC crew had already perished in these remote mountains. Whether prey to the harsh winter weather in which they trekked into the mountains, or at the hands of brigands, was unknown. But their fate gave sufficient grounds to warrant caution.

After eight hours of driving, we dropped off the dirt mountain road and rejoined a tarmac road close to the town of Mergah Sur. The word "town" implies a certain

I checked out of The Baghdad early next day and headed to the KDP office. There I was introduced to Ramazan, a young Pesh Merga armed with an AK-47 and a nickel-plated Colt .45 who was to be my guide. After topping up with gas we set off in the station wagon I had rented in Diyarbakir, Turkey.

Assurances given by various representatives of the Kurds in London that the road was paved "all the way" proved woefully inaccurate. The repair bill

for the rental car mounted steadily with each grinding shock as the undercarriage of the station wagon struck boulders or grounded on the deep ruts carved by large trucks when the roads had been soft winter mud. As we progressed in a series of violent shudders and sudden stops, the suspension was steadily destroyed.

Kurdistan itself is breathtakingly beautiful. Tall mountains recede in all directions to the far horizon. These mountains were once blanketed in thick

prosperity and development entirely absent in this case. Mergah Sur was no more than a single street of neatly bulldozed concrete remains. Kurdish families had returned to the site as the only home they knew and were camping out in the ruins. We pressed on to reach our destination before dark.

Sardawe turned out to be a one-house pit-stop. I was hoping to track down Masud Barzani. Word had it he could be found in Di'ana, a small town further down the valley. Without delay, taking advantage of the last of the light, we moved on. Di'ana was 20 minutes further on and was the first habitation of any size I had seen other than Zakhu which had not been totally destroyed.

Like Zakhu, it was teeming with refugees, but also had a sizable number of armed Pesh Merga in the streets, including *Chawder* (Pesh Merga military police, distinguishable by red armbands). Di'ana was originally a Christian settlement as indicated by its name, meaning in Kurdish: "Christian Town." We located a military barracks now controlled by the Pesh Merga. Several M-54 130mm artillery pieces were lined up outside, together with an old British 25-pounder.

Peace At What Price?

Masud Barzani was not present, being at that time in attendance at the talks taking place in Shaqlawah. Under the united banner of the Iraqi Kurdistan Front, the talks were between all Pesh Merga factions. They were debating the terms of Baghdad's offer of a peace settlement.

Among the Kurds there was no doubt that the Coalition intervention in northern Iraq, together with Saddam's fear of

While talking about peace, Pesh Merga at Shaqlawah were armed to the teeth, as with this Romanian AKM with 96-round magazine attached.



Pesh Merga mobile patrol in pickup in Zargos Mountains.

further punishment from its armed might, had led to the offer of negotiated settlement. While willing to talk, the Kurds had grave misgivings about Saddam's sincerity, convinced that the integrity of any treaty could only be guaranteed by a continued Coalition presence in the region.

As night was falling, it was considered unsafe to push on to Shaqlawah that night. Instead, as a guest of the Pesh Merga, I was allocated a room in the old government hotel in Rawanduz, a mountain town close by. The hotel had been taken over by the KDP during the uprising and was used to accommodate various KDP personnel.

Rawanduz itself is a small town perched on a narrow tongue of land that stretches out from the 7,500-foot Qara Dagh Range. On either side of the town were deep gorges, the Gali Ali Gorge and the Wadi el Maut (Valley of Death), which the hotel overlooked. A legend ascribes the Wadi el Maut's name to an ancient battle between the Turks and Persians. As the two armies confronted each other, the gorge was hidden from view. The advancing Turks unleashed their cavalry. At full gallop, they crested a rise and plunged to destruction in the gorge.

At one time, Rawanduz was the pilgrimage site of a pagan religion. It also has a history of conflict through the ages. When Kurdistan was no more than a complex grouping of independent principalities and sheikdoms, Rawanduz held out against all comers. It was once famed for the forging of cannons. A brass canon forged in the Islamic year 1203 (1782) is displayed on a plinth in a small town square. The last great sheik of Rawanduz was Kor Pasha (Blind Pasha) in the 1800s, who was eventually killed by the Turks.

Early the next day, after bidding farewell to Ramazan, who was to return to Zakhu, and having a new local guide appointed, I set off for the scene of the Pesh Merga talks, Shaqlawah.

It was comforting to see U.S. A-10 "Warthog" tank busters flying overhead

this far beyond the Coalition security zone, doubtless enjoying the scenic flight over the gorge. Thankfully, the new road, built to replace the old British Hamilton road dating from the 1930s, was a good one and we made good time. After leaving the gorge, the road entered a wide valley of huge wheat fields. Kurdistan, when not blighted by war, was able to grow a large surplus of food used to supply the rest of Iraq.

The present crop was a matter of some dispute. After Saddam removed the original Kurdish owners from the land, it was partially repopulated with Arabs from the south as part of his "Arabization" of Kurdistan policy. These Arabs had in turn subcontracted the land to other Kurds who had been displaced from their own lands. Subsequently, there was much heated debate over who owned this year's harvest — the original land owners, the imported Arabs, or their Kurdish tenant farmers who actually planted the crops.

Reaping Saddam's Wheat

With sanctions imposed against Iraq as a result of its invasion of Kuwait, Saddam promised the farmers that if they tilled the land and planted a new harvest, he would exempt them from conscription. This crop became known as "Saddam's wheat." However, having sown Saddam's wheat, the farmers were promptly rounded up and conscripted anyway. So not only was there debate over ownership, there was also a shortage of manpower to harvest the crop, exacerbated by the Iraqi offensive against the Kurds.

Shaqlawah turned out to be a mountain resort town, a sanctuary for rich Iraqis escaping the oppressive summer heat of the plains. Sheltered on the lower slopes of a large range of mountains, it is shaded by many trees and boasts two tourist hotels. Now, one hotel is the HQ of Masud Barzani's KDP; the other, Jalal Talabani's People's Union of Kurdistan (PUK) — the two principle Kurdish Resistance groups.

Continued on page 68

Does The U.S. Army Have A Fear Of **FIREARMS?**

Text & Photos by Robert K. Brown



“WHY no magazine in your weapon?” I asked the young Army specialist standing guard at a Patriot base near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He rolled his eyes. “First sergeant won’t let us,” he said. “Says there’s no threat where we are. Won’t let us load our M60s or .50 cal on the perimeters; won’t give us the clackers for the Claymores.”

Needless to say, I found this more than a bit disturbing. Shades of the Marine guards in Lebanon in 1983 with no rounds in their chambers. We all remember what happened because of that.

Grunts who provided security for Patriot missile sites near Riyadh during Desert Storm were not allowed to carry magazines in their weapons — superiors determined they *were not in a combat zone*.

I decided to investigate the “logic” behind this madness.

“We used to have people clear their weapons with muzzles pointed into a 55-gallon drum partially filled with sand,” a bird colonel told me. “We’d get three or four discharges a day. Then one troop missed the barrel.” (Yes, that’s right, missed the fucking barrel!) “The ricochet hit another trooper in the leg. We decided not to allow them to carry a loaded magazine in their weapons.”

Same story with the brass. One of General Schwarzkopf's staff officers explained that the staff had not been issued Beretta 9mm M9s because they had not been trained in their use, and there was great concern that they might shoot themselves. Many staff and administrative personnel had never even fired their issue Berettas. "The first time these guys saw the Beretta was around the first part of February," the staff officer continued. "They were allowed to play with them — disassembly/assembly — for a couple of hours. Then they were returned to the armory — to be issued when the enemy hit the wire!"

"They were allowed to go the range later and fire 10 rounds — unaimed — to 'get the feel' of the weapon. A few were allowed 10 additional rounds of aimed fire. But some field-grade officers haven't even held the weapon. It's a sad state of affairs, sending soldiers to a combat zone without small arms training. And Riyadh is a combat zone. We could certainly be attacked by a terrorist unit. It's crazy."

I discussed this with a hard-bitten Marine major who had made his way up through the ranks. "That's horseshit," he said. "You're either at war or you're not at war. And Riyadh is part of the war zone."

I asked him if there were terrorists in the area. "Fuck yes," he replied. "When you divide the population up by ethnic groups, you find that the largest group are expatriates. Saddam's no rube. He planted people in the (Saudi) Kingdom long before he invaded Kuwait. The Saudis have picked up terrorists and saboteurs. But they don't share that information with us. They kill them. It serves neither them nor the Coalition well to admit they have an internal security problem. If they admit they have a problem, it refutes their contention that they have the situation under control."

"It's a Catch-22 scenario. CENTCOM (Central Command) isn't prepared for shit. But they won't conduct training because they don't want to admit that their personnel weren't being trained stateside."

"I'm not supposed to have a .38 with 30 rounds of ammo. Nobody carries weapons unless one is an MP or on security detail. CENTCOM doesn't want people walking around carrying weapons for fear of affronting the Saudis. But the Saudis are locked and loaded."

Another source, close to the U.S. intelligence community, said that other Coalition officers were not so willing to go unarmed. "All the Brits and French are carrying sidearms or assault rifles with loaded mags. Fuck local sensitivity ... What probably happened is that someone was so afraid of offending local sensibilities that they didn't even ask. We have intel from Western sources that 200 to 300 Iraqi Special Forces have a potential mission to hit MODA (the Saudi Ministry of Defense and Aviation) and take out high-ranking Coalition commanders."

"During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraqi commandos carried out aggressive, highly effective ops. They neutralized much of Iran's command and control capability. Saddam recruits his Special Forces from his home town, Tikrit. They are loyal to him because of tribal and extended family ties."

"Iraqi SpecOps personnel have received extensive training by Soviet Spetsnaz. We suspect that they are quite competent, that they would probably operate in small cells rather than as individual agents to carry out hits. They receive the best equipment, are better



British general enters Hyatt Regency Hotel, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for briefing. Note holstered pistol. British and French staff officers carried sidearms; Americans did not because they had not been trained with the Beretta 9mm M9 pistol.



Unlike many other soldiers, MPs on perimeter guard were allowed to carry loaded magazines in weapons. This post was located near Saudi Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA). Intelligence sources projected possible attacks on MODA by Iraqi SpecOps units.

paid and better fed. That's how Saddam maintains their loyalty."

He discreetly discussed security measures taken by Gen. Schwarzkopf's bodyguards (U.S. Special Forces counterterrorist personnel from Delta Force).

"They initially broke down their CAR15s into the two major components (upper and lower receiver groups, carried in 'fag bags' or briefcases). When the shooting started, they said to hell with it and started carrying them assembled."

He also told me that the aviators for Gen. Schwarzkopf's version of Air Force One weren't even issued weapons — and they were responsible for making their own way to the aircraft from their billets, which were not co-located with Stormin' Norman's, if the balloon went up and Schwarzkopf needed to get out of Dodge.

I was dismayed by the unarmed state of our forces in the Riyadh area, but I've seen similar bone-headed policies about firearms in Central America. The Special Forces guys on Mobile Training Teams in El Salvador were required to carry their .45s in fag bags — they weren't allowed to carry them in a holster under a baggy shirt like everyone else in Salvador.

So here you had all these muscular *gringos* with short haircuts and airborne tattoos in civvies, carrying identical bags. They knew they weren't kidding anyone. It's as though the U.S. political boobs and dorks wanted to make sure the troops couldn't get those weapons into action quickly, so they wouldn't be able to respond to a terrorist attack.

I talked this over with Devin Benson, a senior NCO in a reserve Special Forces unit. "CENTCOM was caught between a rock and a hard place," Benson told me. "They sure couldn't afford an accidental shooting of a Saudi national. And when you hear stories of soldiers missing a barrel when clearing a weapon, you can sure see why they didn't want guys locked and loaded in an HQ area."

"But if you can't even trust your general staff with sidearms, you've got a real problem. Look at demographics. This generation of soldiers comes largely from an urban

background, especially the officers. They haven't grown up with weapons; their fathers never taught them the basics, like kids from the country. They got all their firearms training in the Army, and the Army doesn't put that much emphasis on small arms training."

I asked him for an example. "OK, I was on a training team in Central America. We carried .45s. We were issued 21 rounds of ammo for personal defense, but no practice ammo. I had never shot the weapon I was issued; it just came out of a rack. I had no idea where it shot — or even if it shot, for that matter."

I pointed out that the Army has never been big on pistol training, stressing instead rifle marksmanship. "It's no different with rifles," Benson said. "After initial training, it's once a year to the range for most troops, unless you're involved in special training. I've had 49 rounds of 5.56 in two years, and I fired that through a rifle that wasn't even my issue weapon. Nine rounds to zero, with 40 rounds for qualification. No practice ammo."

"Granted, I'm a reservist — but this is a reserve Special Forces unit! In theory at least, we're supposed to train to the same standards as active duty forces. In fairness to the Army, we normally get 49 rounds a year, but someone screwed up last year,

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KHOST BUS



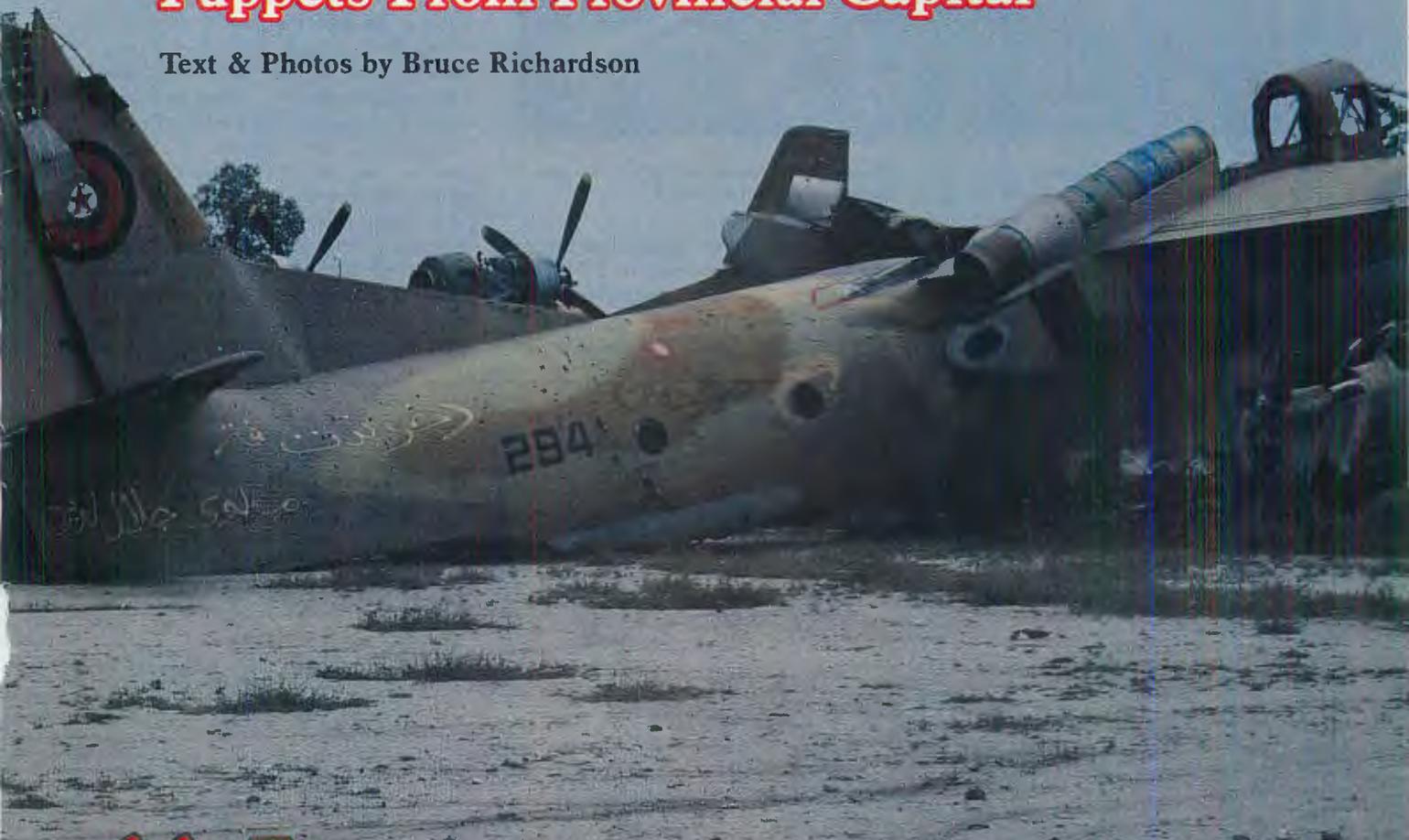
ABOVE: Defiant mujahideen reveal the strength they possessed in defeating overwhelming odds.

LEFT: Victorious mujahideen sit atop captured T-62 tank in Khost.

TERS

Mujahideen Forces (Finally) Kick Puppets From Provincial Capital

Text & Photos by Bruce Richardson



“A

re you pleased with the Khost offensive?” I queried.

“Many of our brothers drank from the cup of martyrdom, but this time we were together. All the parties cooperated and we are united in our victory. Soon, *Insha'allah*, we will once again see the sunrise of peace.”

Placing his hand over his heart, Faiz Mohammed indicated the interview was over. “*Pa mukha dai khuh*” (may goodness go before you), he uttered with a half salute as he strode from the room.

Clusters of adobe buildings surrounded by blank brown walls with narrow-slotted towers guarded the corners, and a square inner keep dominated the scene. Behind the city on each side was a rim of hills, rough and brown. On the north side, beyond the hills, lay the cold, snow-capped Safed-Koh (White Mountains), fragile and incredibly high.

Such was Khost, a land of startling contrast. Brilliant red and pink wild roses were in bloom, framing the dirt roads that came and went. Bluebells and a multitude of other delicately hued wildflowers carpeted the valley floor. This raw beauty seemed illusionary apart from the shell-cratered landscape, shattered buildings and the smell of death that permeated the air.

I'm not certain just how the day began. At 0200, lying in my warm bed, I could hear the thumping of bombs 2 or 3 clicks away. The attack illuminated the area near the old airport and under the dim glow of a near-dead



on the frayed, red carpets they had spread before them.

A man near me named Mohammed Din muttered to himself, nervously fingering his *tasbih* (prayer beads), drawing them back and forth between thumb and forefinger. Bumping along the rain-slicked road, the airport was first on my list for exploration and photographs. Bilal, our driver, who negotiated all roads like his tail was on fire, brought our four-wheel drive to a skidding stop.

Air Force Grounded

Before us lay the incredible sight of the broken, battered remains of 80 aircraft. Many had been caught flat-footed on the runway; others had been shot down. During the three-day artillery and rocket strike that preceded the ground offensive, the Kabul air force inventory of Antonov An-26s, An-32s, MiG-21s and Ilyushin Il-18s had been obliterated right here.

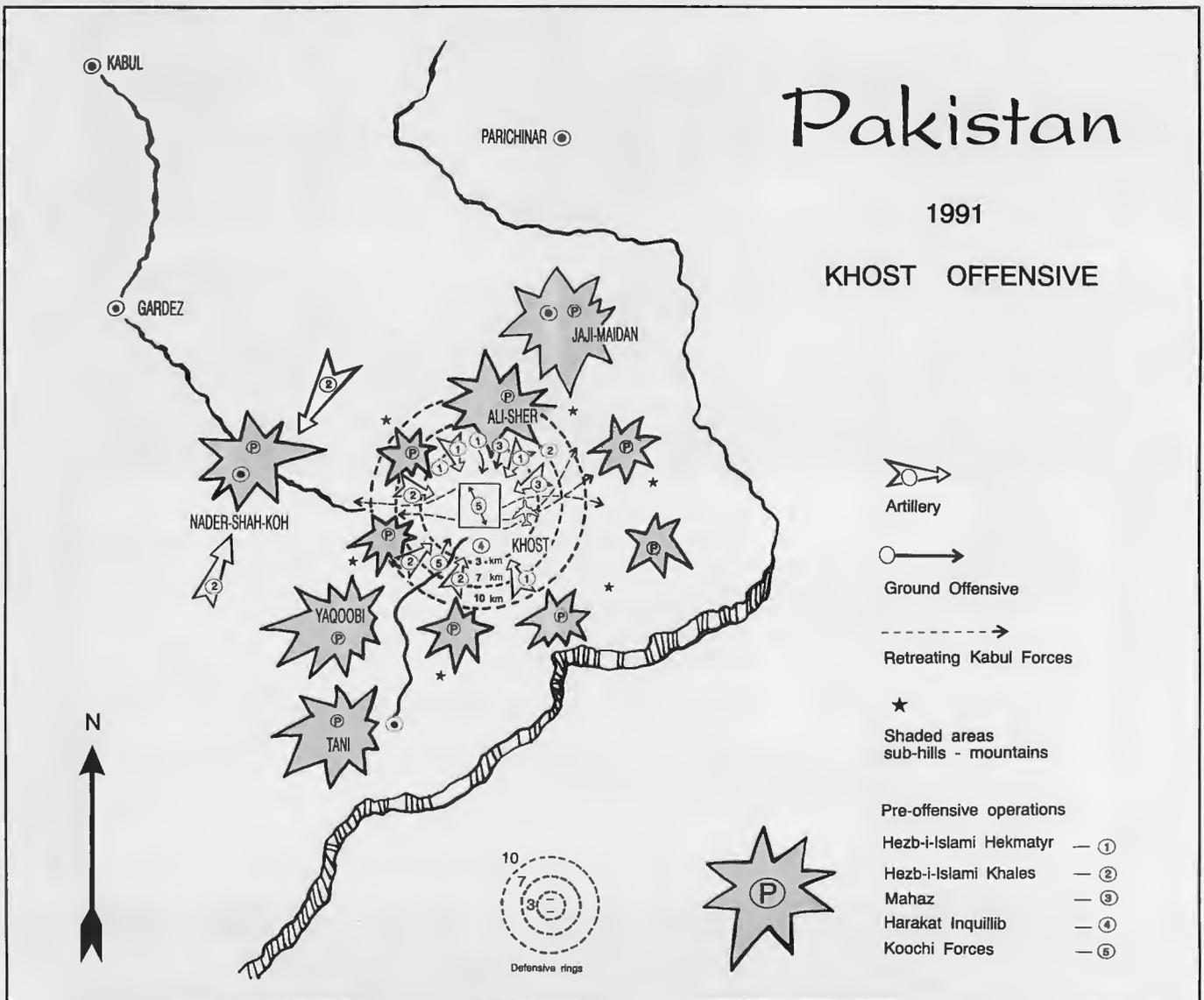
A makeshift swing, ingeniously suspended from the wing of a battered An-26 transport plane, brought a light moment and a smile to the young face of a mujahid. Billeted in the remains of the aircraft, several mujahideen, eager to be

Mini-Mag Lite, I gulped down some tea and scrambled for my gear. There was a rendezvous at the base of the compound wall, but it was quiet now — I went back to bed.

The morning broke gray and ominous; light rain played a melody on the water cans outside. Mir Ghowsuddin frantically

Mujahid aims American-supplied Stinger missile in the sub-district.

worked the pump of the gasoline lantern and the room came alive in a brilliant white light. Turbaned men with black, white, and red beards moved sedately about, stopping to kneel and bow in prayer





Mujahideen crew manning anti-aircraft position at Matun Baba. Most Kabul regime aircraft were destroyed on the ground.

photographed, spilled out on the runway like an army of ants.

The high fortresses of Khost loomed over the plain. Bala-Hissar I, Bala-Hissar II and Matun Baba were strategically located on the highest ground, heavily fortified with a commanding view of the entire valley floor. Here, the Jowzjani Militia had fought to the death.

Lowering ourselves with the aid of a rope, we descended 100 feet into the underground complex of Matun Baba. Holding our flashlights in our mouths, my companion Noor and I illuminated a multichambered complex bursting with Soviet ordnance. RGD-5 grenades, thousands of rounds of all types (7.62x39mm, 7.62x54mm, 12.7mm, 14.5mm, and 23mm, mostly) were literally knee-deep on the sub-terranean floor.

Bilal, bored with our inquisitiveness, lit up one of his smelly Pakistani Red and White's, which glowed eerily in the murky chamber. Sharp-eyed Noor, ever vigilant, found what appeared to be nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) warfare gear — gas masks, rubber protective clothing and strange flask-like canisters with multicolored liquid ensconced in glass tube containers. Later, these canisters were identified as Soviet MSP-18 individual

treatment kits. The clothing was standard OP-1 NBC protective suits; the masks, ShMs.

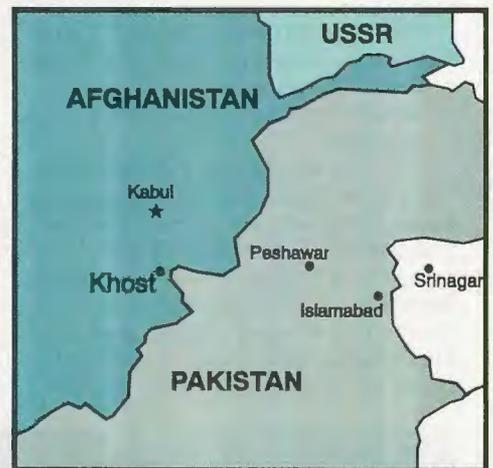
“God Was With Us”

The presence of NBC gear was worrisome. Later that day, Dr. Azim confirmed my suspicions. “On the fourth day of battle in the sub-district, 10km from the center of Khost, the Hezb-i-Islami war party was attacked with chemical weapons,” he told me.

“Did you personally attend to any of the injured, or witness the attack?” I asked, interrupting him.

“Yes,” he replied, “but there was nothing I could do. The martyred were all black and gangrenous; others suffered from intense burning sensations, vomiting, headaches, spasms, and convulsions. It was a hopeless situation — they were all bleeding from the rectum, nose and mouth. No one survived more than three to four hours.”

The doctor, showing obvious signs of



strain, continued. “The attack was from the sky. Two jets flew over our position at an altitude of 50 meters. We could see the pilots ... it was very frightening. When they left, a cloud stayed behind.”

“How large an area was affected?” I asked.

Before us lay the incredible sight of the broken, battered remains of 80 aircraft.



“We were fortunate,” he said. “God was with us. It was very windy. The cloud went away. It was yellow.”

“Doctor, how many were killed?”

“Eighteen.”

Later, we learned that a Scud missile fired from Mazar-i-Sharif impacted in Kunar, killing 400 and injuring more than 500. It carried a chemical warhead.

From the heights, deadly fire rained down upon the advancing mujahideen forces. The Jowzjani Militia, posted to Matun-Baba, Bala-Hissar I and Bala-Hissar II, concentrated heavy machine-

gun, AGS-17 and small-arms fire into the featureless killing fields below. Resistance forces, united and determined, fought tenaciously from street to street, building to building, and door to door, descending like a horde of locusts upon the Soviet-backed Afghani forces in Khost.

Hezb-i-Islami and Jadran fighters dispersed into groups of four and ingeniously used makeshift ladders to

Huge number of shell casings beneath wreckage of Soviet-built Antonov aircraft at Khost Airport indicates intensity of fighting.

Young mujahid boy relaxes in aftermath of battle, swinging from wing of destroyed Soviet-built aircraft at Khost Airport.

scale the compound walls, firing on the enemy below. Using leather slings, the mujahideen hurled their grenades high over the compound walls into the fortress-like positions.

Guerrilla Metamorphosis

Fifteen days after it had begun, the battle for Khost was over. Kabul's overwhelming air and ground supremacy were no match for the combined efforts of seven major mujahideen war parties. The combined arms, deployed by the Kabul regime, were dispersed into circular security belts at 3km, 7km, and 19km, respectively. Main battle tanks (mostly T-62s), artillery and rocket launchers were dug in at strategic areas within the city; Soviet armored personnel carriers (BMPs) were positioned around the city.

The concentration of mines was so heavy and so hastily deployed that many were lying on the surface. It is unclear why the counterbattery fire by the Kabul forces was so ineffective. Soviet PZK sound-ranging systems were deployed, as well as DAK-1 laser range-finders, both the epitome of simplicity.

Aircraft, using laser designators and flying sorties in 19-minute intervals,



HUMANITARIAN AID AND SOVIET CLUSTER BOMBS



Mujahid displays drogue chute used to deliver cluster bombs at Bala-Hissar, Khost.

European democracies and possibly foster a re-emergence of anti-Western elements back to power.

But let us who bequeath aid and support to governments in need, demand that they, as recipients of said aid, conform to the norms of accepted international behavior. Let us not be outmaneuvered by the Soviets again. While the "guarantors" to the Geneva Accords engage in geopolitics, the result is economic and societal dislocations of unimaginable proportions for the Afghan people and others.

— B.R.

Overshadowed by events in the Persian Gulf, the war in Afghanistan goes largely unreported. "Negative symmetry" has been eclipsed by massive, monthly military consignments from the Soviets to their puppet regime in Kabul (roughly \$300-400 million). Also, during the month of May, 1991, 400 Scud missiles and 20 SU-24 fighter-bombers were delivered to the Kabul Airport.

In the north, Soviet pilots flew cross-border raids against the mujahideen Resistance in Takhar Province and the district of Qaisar. Soviet military personnel have fired more than 1,500 Scuds from their complex at Darul-aman into the Afghan countryside since their withdrawal in February, 1989. Confirmed sources indicate high-altitude bombing missions are being flown by the Soviets in support of the Kabul regime (near Khost, Takhar and Qaisar).

Additionally, Soviet ethnic troops from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan S.S.R. are fighting in Afghanistan. Although vigorously denied by Moscow and "Gorbaphiles" in Washington, the evidence is irrefutable. Moscow has clearly frozen its position on Afghanistan.

Recently, the Soviet Union has asked the United States and other Western nations to assist them through their "winter of discontent" with massive humanitarian aid. The contribution of the U.S., already at \$2.5 billion, will soon total some \$3 billion. The U.S. subsidy will manifest itself in the form of government-guaranteed farm credits, restored access to U.S. imports, and investment insurance.

In order to facilitate this aid package, the administration is obliged to waive the Jackson-Vanik amendment, a concept which links trade status to a respect for fundamental human rights.

Do the American people approve of the subordination of more deserving nations from the benefit of U.S. aid by diverting tax dollars to a government that continues to fuel the fires of an unjust war?

Yes, it may be in America's national interest that the Soviet Union not fall into social chaos which could lead to an exodus of refugees to the West — as well as burden shaky Eastern

blackened the skies of Khost, dropping cluster bombs, laser-guided bombs, and firing 57mm and 80mm unguided rockets. Soviet technicians at the Darul-aman complex in Kabul fired 45 Scud B's in 15 days in a desperate attempt to stem the tide.

Ramadan 1991 was the metamorphosis: A fractious guerrilla group, the mujahideen, had become a united military front.

During our interview, I asked the question, "Why, despite the overwhelming military superiority of the Kabul regime, were the mujahideen victorious and took so few casualties, relatively speaking?"

"First: We called a council between the religious community and the military commanders of all the political parties," Commander Engineer Faiz Mohammed of the Jihad Wal and Hezb-i-Islami replied. "This was so we could devise an orderly evacuation of all noncombatants. This was accomplished for all 20,000 of Khost's civilians."

"Was this not a tip-off to the military that an attack was imminent?"

"Yes, but it could not be avoided. Second: We held a military council — all parties were represented, and all pledged cooperation. Additionally, two high-ranking Kabul defectors aided our intelligence on defensive positions inside Khost — including minefields, locations of artillery, tanks, soldiers and so on."

"Who were these defectors?"



A D-30 122mm artillery piece unleashes against the heavily fortified city of Khost prior to ground attack.

"Army Chief of Staff General Shahnawaz Tanai and Minister of Transportation Wafadar Khan, both of whom are from Khost. We were criticized by some for using these defectors. Some

say we are communist sympathizers, but we believe strongly in marshalling all available resources. The importance of their intelligence cannot be overemphasized; it saved many lives, perhaps thousands. They also provided intelligence on enemy positions in the

Continued on page 73

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BULLPUP

Continued from page 29

average law enforcement countersniper's engagement distance is no more than 80 meters and only rarely up to 300 meters. An accuracy potential of 1.5 MOA is entirely adequate for those scenarios. Furthermore, the anticipated threat will undoubtedly be bobbing and weaving about and a semiautomatic rifle's ability to deliver second and third shots quickly is important, especially if the shooter is faced with multiple targets.

The wound ballistics performance of U.S. M80 7.62x51mm ball ammunition is characteristic of most non-deforming Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) military rifle projectiles. For the first 6 to 7 inches of travel through living tissue, the bullet remains point forward and the wound track is no longer than .30 caliber. At 8 to 14 inches of penetration, the bullet yaws 180 degrees, after which it passes through the body base-forward with a total penetration of about 25 inches — excessive for most law enforcement applications. Where bullet yaw is at its maximum, 60 to 120 degrees, a large temporary cavity is produced and the height of the permanent cavity will increase to 1.6 inches (the length of the 150-grain boattail projectile) maximum.

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When properly maintained, the M14 system has proven reliability. The Pachmayr Decelerator buttpad is quite effective in moderating perceived recoil as is the G2's straight-line stock geometry. The G2 bullpup has, in general, excellent balance and handling characteristics. The question remains, why put an M14/M1A into bullpup configuration?

If you have ever tried to scramble through narrow doors and hallways in an urban environment while under enemy fire with a full-sized rifle, such as the M14 or an FN FAL, you already know the answer to that question. Compactness is a highly desirable attribute of any battle rifle.

AWC Systems Technology can provide complete G2 systems (except for the selective-fire model) with any of the mentioned options, convert the users existing M14/M1A rifle to G2 specifications or provide retrofit kits to agencies and individuals who prefer to do their own conversions.



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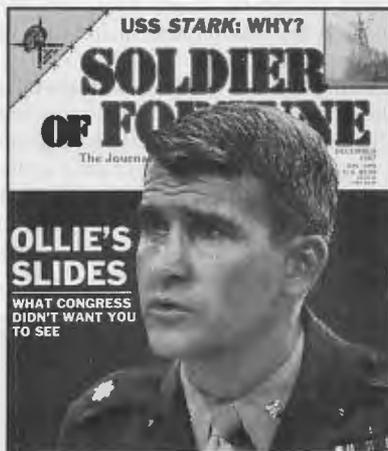
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point, I was laughing pretty hard, too. What a way to fight a "Cold War." ✕

KURDISTAN

Continued from page 57

As the terms of the treaty with Baghdad were being thrashed out between all the Kurdish factions, the town was naturally inundated with Pesh Merga. On the streets could be seen men from all over Kurdistan. It was possible to distinguish where they came from, and even their tribe, from the style of costume favored by each regional group.

Those from Zakhu wore traditional loose-fitting outfits made up from cloth of bold, vertical stripes, mostly in browns and grays. Men of the Barzani tribe wore red-colored *jama danas*, the traditional Kurdish headdress. Each man wore wide *peshten* (cummerbunds) of 8 yards of cloth wound around the waist. These are also meant to serve as shrouds should they be killed in battle.

Masud Barzani was busy with the talks but agreed to grant an interview the following day. With time on hand, I set off to view the front lines. A short drive on the road to Arbil soon brought me to the Pesh Merga checkpoint at Chory Pass, scene of Masud Barzani's stand against the Iraqi army counter-offensive.

A burnt out T-54 tank, plastered with posters of recently killed Pesh Merga, was immobilized in rusting decay on one side of the road. Around this, heavily armed Pesh Merga had set up their checkpoint. Traffic was passing in two lines and subject to a brief search and passenger ID check. Pushing on from this checkpoint, we pulled up 200 meters short of the Iraqi checkpoint and took a few (photo) stills, which made the Iraqis a touch jumpy.

The three sentries standing by the roadside began waving angrily and making threatening gestures with their AKs. Feeling rather exposed on the road, I decided it was time to make a polite and discreet withdrawal, particularly as Iraqi troops in a clump of trees further back could be seen stepping into slit trenches.

Back in the Pesh Merga lines, I was escorted up into the ridges that overlooked the road and saw the front-line positions being held by a platoon-sized unit of Pesh Merga. They were well-spaced and occupied firing positions built up against the natural cover afforded by the boulders and rock of the ridge line.

Beyond them, the valley that opened up was in Iraqi hands. But looking down onto the burned-out armor on the road, it was easy to see how difficult it would be to dislodge anyone determined to hold these ridges. Even if the Iraqis had been successful here, there were more ridges behind, each of which would have to be hard fought for, if held by determined men.

I WAS THERE

Continued from page 18

world to see. I don't think he had ever seen anything like that before, because first he looked stunned, then shocked, then he broke out in hysterical laughter.

He laughed so hard he fell over the chair he was sitting on, knocking down that gorgeous beach umbrella. This just made him laugh harder. He was totally beside himself. Then he got into the act, turning around and dropping his drawers to shoot a moon in my direction. Then he fell down in side-splitting laughter, jumped up and mooned me again, falling down and rolling in the dirt, then jumping up and repeating the whole process, all the while laughing uncontrollably. At this

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The KDP Pesh Merga were well-disciplined and organized on traditional military lines in: *dastars* (squads), *pals* (platoons), *leks* (companies) and battalions, although the numbers in each unit were less than you would expect in a conventional force. Their weapons were those that a mobile guerrilla unit could effectively be expected to carry over the rugged terrain. These included AGS-17 grenade launchers — trophies of their recent successes over the Iraqi army.

As the day drew to a close, it was time to head back to Rawanduz and prepare for my meeting with Masud Barzani the next day.

Peter Douglas is a British combat photojournalist who has covered several wars in Asia and the Middle East for SOF.

BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 16

solid design for combat in Vietnam? Conversations with those who used the issue blades say it was. A consummate professional, Baker was often in the field with those who carried his equipment.

Of the current batch of knives borrowing heavily from the rich heritage of the men Baker served with, he has this

to say: "I would hope all those who have made money off the knife I designed for SOG will have donated a portion of their profits to organizations which represent the sacrifices and heroics of those who carried the blade in Southeast Asia. If they haven't, I don't think too highly of their ethics or products."

Amen, brother.✂

SHINING PATH

Continued from page 33

that it's a shame that it's the death of a colleague that has brought us together. The others are from Lima-based newspapers and are going to Ayacucho to cover the story and hopefully get the truth behind it all.

Forty-five minutes later, we land in the Andes Mountains at Ayacucho. It is still early, and a lot cooler because of the high elevation. I join with another photojournalist as we disembark the plane. We are met by a number of local journalists, and all unite in a direct huddle. They pass around extremely graphic photos of the executed journalist. I can't help but feel that we're being watched. This is a feeling I would become accustomed to over the next few days.

Putting that thought aside for a moment, I realize the amount of camera equipment the other Caucasian photojournalist and I have dangling around our necks and swinging from our shoulders would add up to more than a full year's wages for these people — including the military and police.

I suddenly feel very vulnerable here; the walls have ears. And Shining Path is everywhere, as my colleague keeps reminding me. Any of these people standing around watching us could be killers, and it seems wherever we go people stop what they're doing and observe us.

Indeed, I was told in the airport that Shining Path would by this time be aware of our presence in the area, and as some friendly advice, we should be very careful wherever we went and who we were seen with. We're getting a look of distrust from people everywhere we go, including open stares from military and police, who seem to want to tell us that we're strangers, are not welcome here, are poking our noses in business that doesn't concern us.

At this point, my colleague's bizarre sense of humor was giving way to bets. He was deciding who would more likely want to kill us: the military, Shining Path, or the very militia unit we came to interview.

Looking Like The Enemy

As the other photojournalist and I say goodbye to one another, I am aware that

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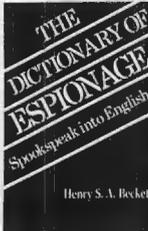
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except for my contact, I am once again alone in a dangerous country — a country that recently killed a Japanese businessman for looking like the president of Peru, and where American journalist Todd Smith was found dead after being held for days by Shining Path.

A note found with Smith's body suggests the murder was carried out by Shining Path. On the note were the words, "Die North American spies linked to the Pentagon who are carrying out an antisubversive plan in Latin America and especially Peru. Death to North American imperialism. Long live the Communist Party. Long live the war of the people." He had been tortured before his death.

I transfer to the back of a pickup truck, the usual form of transportation, with 22 people, two pigs and a chicken. Looking around the beautiful countryside, it's hard to believe there is so much violence and death everywhere. We pass ancient Inca ruins that show renovation efforts that were halted mid-way after the last series of archaeologists were killed. (During my stay, I was handed an arrowhead as a souvenir. When I expressed an interest that it be put in a museum, I was told there were many more to be discovered, but no one was brave enough to go get them.)

After I am let off, my contact finally arrives, and we head for Quinua, 20 minutes away. Arrival in the village finds all assortments of weapons and people waiting for us. Kids show signs of having grown up too fast while living in a war zone; old men and women appear as if they are fighting the war single-handedly.

Their weapons are everything from shotguns provided by the military to a wide assortment of homemade weapons — some made out of pieces of old pipe for a barrel, a hand-carved wooden stock, a bent nail on a spring for a firing pin. One has to disengage the barrel from the wooden stock and manually place the round in the barrel. These are the weapons these people have to defend their villages, their lives, and their children with.

The leader of the village told me that in June, more than 100 Shining Path terrorists attacked only 30 villagers. The villagers held them off until 200 reinforcements came. But Shining Path seems to get stronger each time. I photographed an old woman who broke down and began crying. She had reached her limit and could take no more. She was clutching a homemade spear.

The spear was just one of the primitive weapons that the peasants have to use against the well-armed Shining Path. Shining Path has arsenals of automatic weapons and grenades, most of which were captured from the Peruvian military.

The ones who can't take it anymore flee their villages. From Peru's emergency zone, which makes up 60% of the country, most people have relocated to the cities, such as Lima, in gigantic, sprawling shanty towns to live in indescribable

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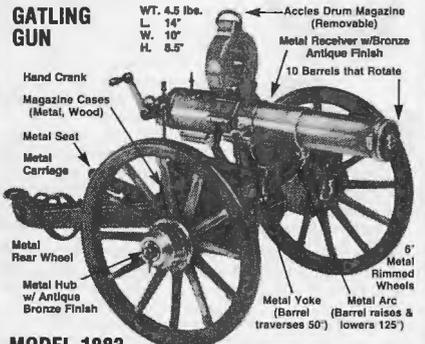
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poverty. Many survive by selling individual cigarettes in the streets; they live in run-down settlements in what amounts to cardboard boxes with no running water, no sanitation, and a cholera epidemic.

Shortly after returning to Lima from Ayacucho, I find a message from the military giving the green light to visit one of the areas in the emergency zone. There is conflict in most of the areas.

After speaking with the military press liaison officer, we decide on Taraputo Province. This seems the most likely place to see some action, and the liaison officer informs me that there has been a lot of guerrilla activity in that area.

Florida-based Peter Noble is an award-winning British photographer. This is his first story for SOF. In our next issue, join Noble deep in the bush of Taraputo with the Peruvian army in search of MRTA terrorists.✕

FIREARMS

Continued from page 59

and we never even went to the range. The ammo request didn't get submitted on time, supposedly. And people wondered why we didn't get activated for the Gulf.

"I needed a current 'expert' qual in my record to go to sniper school," Benson continued. "I arranged to go to the range with another unit if I provided my own ammo. Fine, I didn't mind paying for some 5.56 ball. No go, the admin guys told me. They said there's a reg against shooting privately purchased ammo through a GI weapon. And these guys would die before bending a reg."

I also talked to a reserve doctor just back from the Gulf, a lieutenant colonel, Airborne Ranger. He said he was issued a holster — nothing to put in it; just a new Bianchi holster, which he had to wear empty on his web gear. He was in a front-line field medical unit.

"Presumably, they were going to open up the arms room and pass out weapons in the event of a terrorist attack. I don't think very many of us would have stood patiently in line while the armory NCO looked for his keys," he noted.

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KHOST

Continued from page 65

outlying sub-districts of Ali-Sher and Jaji-Maidan.

"Third: We captured or neutralized all communist positions in the surrounding hills, concentrating on Jaji-Maidan, Ali-Sher, Tani, Yaqoobi. We also sealed off the road to Gardez at Nader-Shah-Kot, which would be a major resupply route for the Khost garrison.

"Fourth: Infiltration of our forward observers began, using maps and data obtained from General Tanai and Minister Wafadar. These observers would direct our artillery and rocket fire with radios on a regular basis.

"Fifth: From the north, south, and west of Khost, a massive artillery and rocket attack was launched — it continued for three days."

"What about retaliatory strikes — air and counterbattery?" I asked.

"By continuously dispersing our forces, we were able to minimize losses, and then our troops — 5,000 strong from all sides — began the ground offensive."

"What was the duration of the ground war?"

"Fifteen days, although we are pursuing the Jowzjani Militia as we speak. Insha'allah, we will catch them soon."

The author has made three clandestine trips into Afghanistan to report on that country's war. His stories have been published in SOF, Newsweek, the Chicago Tribune, and the Afghanistan Mirror.

FRIENDS

Continued from page 42

tional plebiscite on 8 April 1991, more than 90% of the people voted for a democratic form of government to oust the communists. The formal announcement to the Western world was issued on 25 June 1991. Two days later, the communist government in Belgrade rejected the vote and committed tanks and MiGs against the Slovenians and Croats.

Immediately after a shaky cease-fire went into effect, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker issued a statement to the press in which the U.S. "deplored the efforts of the Slovenians to break away from the federal government of Yugoslavia."

That put the U.S. squarely on the side of a hard-line Marxist state against a tiny country willing to fight for its freedom and a democratic, pro-Western government. The following day, in a not-too-surprising move, the Department of State trotted out spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler, who mumbled something about the U.S. "backing the efforts of Slovenia in her desperate struggle for freedom."

Since those "stirring" words were uttered, a three-man team from the European Community met with representatives from



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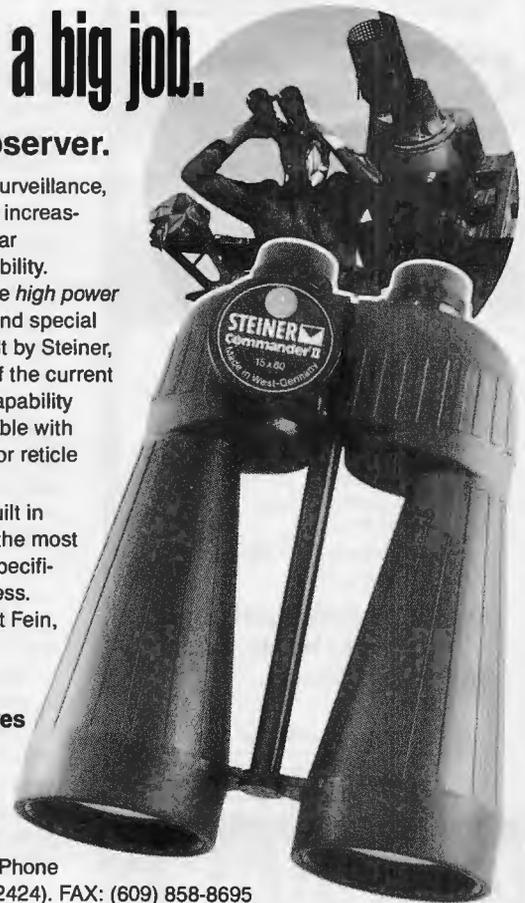
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all sides on the Brioni Archipelago in the Adriatic Sea and succeeded in developing an agreement that included a 90-day stand-down for troops from both factions and a Slovenian promise to withhold independence movements during that time frame.

While the diplomats were doing their thing, the head of the general staff of the Yugoslav army, Soviet-trained Colonel General Blagoje Adzic, issued a secret operations order titled "BEDEM" that outlined, in detail, plans for the take-over of the republics of Slovenia and Croatia, returning them, and any other would-be break-away republics, to communist control.

Hard on the heels of the foregoing developments came the announcement that President Bush and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulrooney would be meeting soon to discuss the "situation in Slovenia and aid to the Soviet Union."

The man on the street in Ljubljana is too polite to say that he fears the outcome of U.S.-Soviet talks when it comes to the future of Slovenia and his freedom from communism. He will say, however, that he is "disappointed" in the response of the U.S. in siding with the Yugoslavs.

My personal view is harsher than that of the Slovenians. I'm afraid for the future of this tiny country and its hard-headed, stubborn, brave people, given the U.S. government's abysmal track record in helping freedom fighters around the world against Marxists.

— M.W.

CROATIA

Continued from page 45

between the Croats and the Serbian paramilitary groups, many of whom are Chetniks — hard-line Marxists who are determined to prevent the Croatian republic from seceding from the Yugoslav communist government — are the rules of engagement.

When units of the YA join with Chetnik forces against the Croats, the Croats are under strict orders *not* to fire on YA troops, even though the army is inflicting heavy casualties on the Croats.

The rationale for this is that the Croatian government, with good reason, fears that by defending themselves against the YA and returning fire, such actions will give the Yugoslav government an excuse to declare all-out war against the Croatian republic and its people. They are convinced that the YA would not hesitate to bomb downtown Zagreb with MiG-23s and MiG-29s.

When it came time to leave and return to Zagreb, I took a look around at the police and their scant weaponry. For some reason, best known to the gods of war, it seems that the "good guys" in the world of battles always wind up with damned little in the way of effective hardware, while the bastards in the halls of power have the armor, artillery, aircraft and muscle that go with them.

What's worse is when the "good guys"

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happen to be unlucky enough to listen to the U.S. government, especially the State Department, when it urges them to "overthrow the tyrants that are oppressing them" and believe what they here. They inevitably wind up like the Czechs, the Hungarians, the contras, and the mujahideen. To that pitiful group, you can also add the Kurds.

If the YA does go ahead and attack the Croats, there's no doubt, from a strictly tactical standpoint, that the Croats will be crushed. But based on what I saw, the YA is going to come out of that mess with one helluva lot of bloody noses.

Mike Williams is a long-time SOF correspondent who has spent most of his life "going and doing" in interesting hot spots around the world. ✕

POW/MIA

Continued from page 51

It is no secret that the NVA still harbor great contempt and animosity toward their Laotian comrades. Consequently, there is no way the NVA would have given the PL any downed American airmen. This means that Vietnam must account for these people. Practically speaking, then, 79 missing Americans must be accounted for by the Laotian government. There are some 200 crash sites in Laos to be investigated. At the rate of 1.5 investigations per year, by the year 2124, all will have been inspected.

On several occasions, ranking Laotian officials have admitted to knowing the fate of these missing men. The PL government, which the IAG claims to be 100% cooperative, has denied U.S. representatives access to these officials on several occasions.

Another scam pulled by our "100% cooperative" Laotian friends was to have the United States pay money up front for the Laotians accompanying Americans to crash sites. These Laotians were paid standard TDY rates, which came out to about \$120 per day, per man. Multiply that by the 15 or so Laotians, and you see what Uncle Sam is getting bilked for. When a job is finished, the Laotians present Uncle Sam with another bill for hotels, meals and entertainment.

Of the 83 Americans missing in Cambodia, none have been accounted for. Six sets of remains returned by the Phnom Penh government were not human. Very little work has been done in Cambodia because the CIA has kept everyone away. The agency has been busy supporting various resistance groups (Khmer Rouge, Khmer Serai, Khmer Khome) that are fighting Vietnamese occupation forces and their Cambodian surrogates. Because of this, at the request of the CIA, other U.S. government agencies have stayed out of

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the picture.

French Recount Mutilations

In 1967, the North Vietnamese made the decision to return all French stay-behinds who had remained in North Vietnam after 1954. Most of these former French soldiers were married, had families in North Vietnam and were reluctant to leave. Upon their arrival in France, they were debriefed by the CIA station in Paris, and naturally questioned about any live-sightings of American POWs.

The Agency received a myriad of answers, but there was one common bit of information in all reports: mutilations. The French sources provided information that U.S. pilots captured in outlying areas were being mutilated by local villagers or militias. Locals believed they were cutting off hands or arms that pushed buttons which dropped bombs, killing their relatives. French sources had come from a multitude of areas in North Vietnam, and had no time to get together and corroborate or make up their accounts.

When their reports were disseminated, it was felt by U.S. intelligence sources that these mutilated American prisoners would never be returned. At Operation Homecoming in 1973, not one amputee stepped off the "Freedom Birds." I read the CIA reports many times. These documents have since disappeared.

If 3,000 airman were shot down, it would only stand to reason that a number would suffer crippling injuries and amputations. It's one thing to have a POW return with scars from beatings, but quite another to return with an intentional amputation.

If analysts working on the POW question plotted all crashes on their maps, then on an overlay plotted where airmen who returned during Operation Homecoming were shot down, a pattern would emerge. Airmen shot down in urban areas and captured by regular PAVN forces returned; airmen shot down in rural areas and captured by the local populace did not.

This simple analysis may answer the question as to why some Americans were known to have landed safely on the ground, placed in the prison system of North Vietnam, yet never returned. Were they mutilated as the French reports suggest?

A closer look at the remains of airmen at CIL-HI might reveal a pattern of missing extremities, thus confirming the mutilation theory. At this time, CIL-HI has not released any information that could support or refute this theory. It may be time for real experts, such as Tony Sager or Dr. Neep (who ran the Tan Son Nhut mortuary), to take over CIL-HI and get the "home-stealers" out of there.

The fact of the matter is that the NVA and VC executed many American POWs, an act contrary to the laws of the 1954 Geneva Convention (of which North

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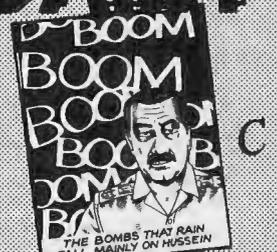
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Vietnam was a signatory), and contrary to every known concept of human decency.

The evidence for this is overwhelming. Take the case of Ron Dodge, who was shot down over North Vietnam in 1967. In 1969, a photo was published of Dodge as a POW. In 1973, at Operation Homecoming, he was absent. In 1981, the Vietnamese government returned his remains without any explanation.

Major Nick Rowe, who was a POW in Vietnam, personally witnessed the execution of a fellow American POW, Rocky Vansants, at the hands of his captors. His crime: an unwillingness to cooperate with the enemy. The Vietnamese government must be held accountable for these men and hundreds more that suffered the same fate.

Playing POWlitics

The IAG was formed to assist in the resolution of the POW problem. What it has done is create another level of bureaucratic confusion. Sufficient lobbying pressure has been applied by U.S. business interests to galvanize some in the Bush administration into dedicating itself to the normalization of relations with Vietnam.

The State Department has been asked to see that relations are established with Vietnam and, as a result, was the architect of Road Map. DoD has followed State's lead and has convinced its fellow member, the NSC, also to tow the line.

This leaves one more representative on the IAG — the League of Families. What is the motivation which allows its executive director, Anne Mills-Griffith, to constantly ignore the human rights abuses being committed in both Vietnam and Laos? And why does she praise the PL government for cooperating 100% when the facts show less than 10% cooperation and 90% lip service? Is she motivated by power and the importance of her job?

It appears that the State Department has abrogated its input with reference to its Laotian policy to her and is consequently allowing several people outside the government to dictate how the U.S. government will conduct foreign policy. Does Mills-Griffith have enough political pull herself to become the major stumbling block to the POW issue, as reported by former DIA - POW/MIA section chief Colonel Millard Peck?

Mills-Griffith's is yet another agenda that is not in the best interests of the POWs nor the ordinary citizens of Southeast Asia. The only Indochinese who are benefiting from the POW issue are the 38 Vietnamese employed by the office in Hanoi (this number is sure to increase as more Vietnamese officials obtain jobs with the U.S. government for untrained relatives). The United States also has offered to pay for all salaries of Laotians who work on projects in Laos.

Each of the military services has a casualty officer, who is tasked with



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updating POW/MIA families on developments pertinent to their case. Here is where one of the main glitches has developed in the system. Service casualty officers (SCOs) were established to notify next of kin, and to inform and guide families through the service benefit process. Their entire exposure to a family should be two to three weeks.

The DIA, on the other hand, is an intelligence organization trained to analyze and process raw data, not deal with distraught families. The SCOs have relinquished their responsibility to the DIA, which now must deal directly with families on POW matters, thus violating many principles of good, covert intelligence.

One recommendation would be to establish an office between the DIA and the SCOs. This office would analyze and provide a synopsis of each case to a family. They would constantly update the synopsis, and most important, provide a rationale for all decisions and findings made in reference to a specific case.

The main problem that families always raise is that they do not know what is going on nor the reason why certain conclusions were reached. Trained analysts can provide these answers. Problems would not have surfaced in 1973 after Operation Homecoming if it were done then.

An example would be a one-page synopsis containing a description of an incident leading to capture or death of an

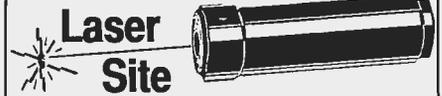
individual and the rationale for the finding — presumptive finding of death (PFD), Killed in Action - Body Not Recovered (KIA-BNR), etc.

If live-sightings or any new information were received, the casualty data sheet would be updated and a revised finding would be provided. A casualty officer would then provide the data sheet to the family.

A further recommendation would have the normalization of relations contingent upon the human rights issues in Southeast Asia versus the repatriation of bones. The rulers of Laos have decreed a new constitution outlawing all political parties except the PL. Considering the majority of the population are from hill tribes and not eligible to even join the "party," you have minority rule. Does this sound like South Africa?

Finally, someone has to be in charge. The IAG concept of running this issue with unqualified personnel and non-government personnel dictating foreign policy simply has not worked. A temporary cabinet-level post should be established with a known entity who has experience in the field (such as General Robert Kingston, who has been involved with the issue for 25 years) in charge — not some political hack. We need someone who can give direction to this whole process rather than play politics. This would accomplish the mission and ease the suffering of the families and this nation. ✕

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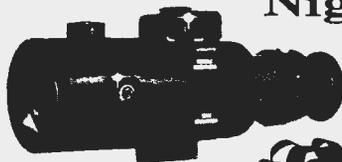
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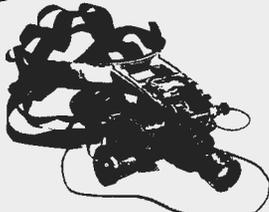
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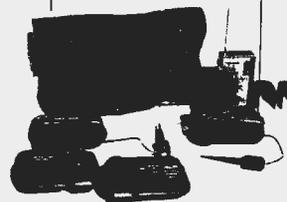


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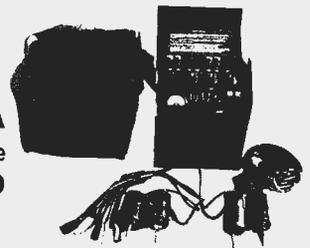
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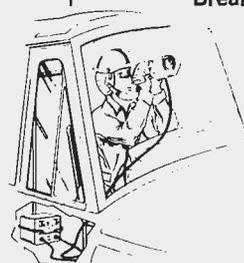
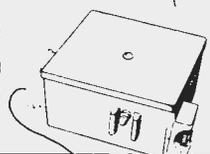


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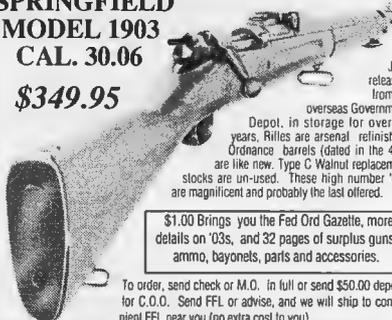
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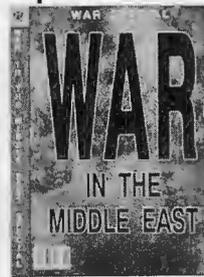
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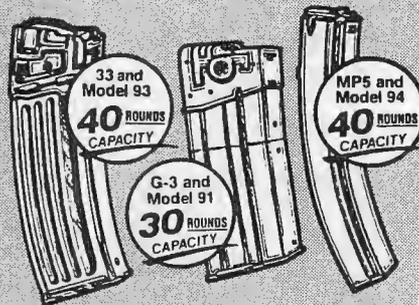
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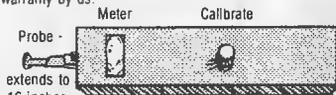
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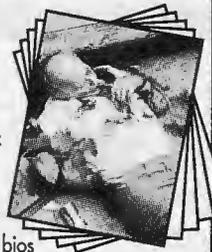
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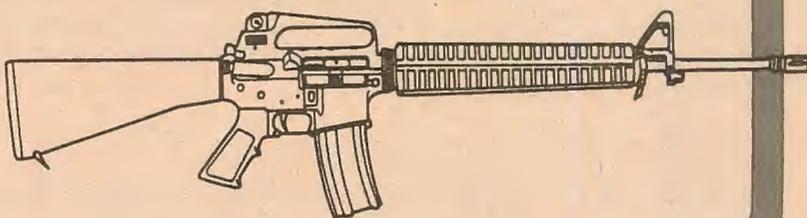
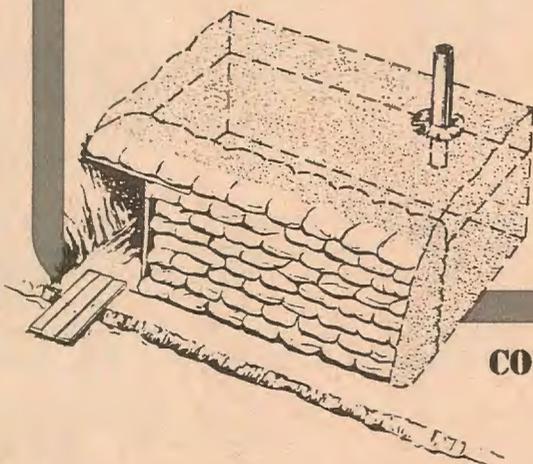
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WEAPONS CACHING



COURTESY OF SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE

SOF reprinted the U.S. Army Special Forces caching manual last month. If you don't have that issue or the manual (TC-31/29A), get one. A lot of what we'll cover this month assumes that you are aware of the basic techniques discussed in that document.

Proliferating gun laws and a growing crime threat in this country make knowing how to properly store or hide weapons increasingly important to civilian gun owners. But civilians, particularly city dwellers, face different tactical problems than a military unit or rural guerrilla force. Thus, the focus of this article is on weapons caching solutions relevant to the needs of the legally armed citizen.

A weapons cache or secure storage system must be individually tailored to your local environment, the risks faced, types of weapons you will be storing and specific location of your cache or hide site. Rather than attempt to catalog the infinite variety of caching solutions, we will analyze those factors so that you may individually configure the best system for your needs.

Less than a generation ago, there would have been no need for a series like this. But ownership of firearms was taken for granted then. You secured them the way you protected any other valuable possessions: locked your home while you were away if you lived in or near a large city, and kept them in a locked cabinet or closet if you were worried about small children handling them. You cared for your guns by using them and cleaning them afterwards.

Times have changed. Civilian ownership of firearms is no longer considered an American birthright. The Second Amendment has been de facto repealed by laws of questionable constitutionality, particularly in major urban areas such as New York City and Washington, D.C. and in more "progressive" states such as California, New Jersey and the People's Republic of Massachusetts. There are many good Americans living in those states who were turned into criminals overnight — not by any antisocial actions on their part, but by legislative decree.

We need to make a legal point here. SOF views noncompliance with firearms bans not as illegal action or even civil disobedience, but rather as an exercise of one of our most important civil liberties: the right to keep and bear arms. The right of the citizen to self-defense is the most basic of civil rights. We consider the constitutional protection of tools of defense, provided for by the 2nd Amendment, as essential to preservation of all of our civil liberties.

Guns are emergency equipment, life preservers in the most basic sense. Guns, or more accurately the coercive force they imply, guarantee our rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

However, not everyone sees it this way. Be aware of the legal realities of the area you live in. We're in the information business, and the 1st Amendment protects us — so far. But if you run afoul of the law in following techniques discussed last month or this month, don't say we didn't warn you.

THREAT ANALYSIS

The first step in protecting your guns isn't deciding where to bury them: it's identifying the *actual* threats. This assessment must be complete and realistic. Unnecessary measures or caching activity may attract attention, but don't underestimate real dangers.

Potential threats may include criminals, environmental factors, children, government agencies, neighbors, rioting civilians, and hostile foreign forces, roughly in that order. Let's break it down some more:

CRIME

Crime is probably the greatest risk. Guns are a high-priority target for criminals. Gun owners do not want to arm a criminal or nut case who will kill someone, turning up the heat for more gun laws. The Catch-22 is that gun laws drive up the value of stolen guns, so if in an area with stringent gun laws one must employ extra security.

Cars are constantly broken into, and guns rank right behind tape decks and compact disk players as the favorite compact and valuable take. Small strongboxes designed just for securing guns in trucks and automobiles are available or can be easily fabricated. A padlocked steel tool box bolted to the floor won't cost much and will stop an average punk. Don't count on your trunk lock for much protection.

To assess the crime risk in your area, talk to cops — officially and off the record. Find out if guns are targeted by burglars in your area, and what their MO is. Your insurance company is also a good source.

Gun store owners are a good source of anecdotal information. Ask them if they've been victims of attempted thefts. Only fairly serious bad guys or complete wackos will try to rip off a gun shop, but you need to know if either are active in your area. Cross-check information from gun store owners with the cops, and vice versa, and you'll get a pretty accurate picture.

The crime reporter at the local paper may also be a source. If a lot of cars have been broken into without the tape decks being stolen, guns may be the target. If a lot of pickups and Blazer-type vehicles are being broken into, guns are also a likely target, since crooks know these vehicles are popular with outdoorsmen and, lacking trunks, may have guns stashed under the seats or in the glove compartments.

If drug dealers are active in your area, be especially concerned about gun thefts, not so much by the pushers — they have plenty of money to buy guns, and they have no qualms about breaking existing laws. Worry about junkies and cokeheads trading your guns for crack. Worse, the junkie may decide, now that he has a gun, to graduate to heavier crime than car break-ins.

Gangs pose a serious risk to gun owners. Theft is the main way they obtain guns. Talk to the cops on the gang detail in your area for insights into the way these punks operate. The police will be plenty happy to talk to a gun owner who wants to keep his weapons away from gangs.

ENVIRONMENT

A rifle with a rusted barrel and action or a warped stock isn't much good, and if you've cached your weapons near a hillside that slides in an earthquake you may have a tough time recovering your guns. Environment is a serious concern for intermediate or long-term gun storage and, in some areas, heat and humidity may cause problems in a matter of days. If you live near a sea coast or in a high-humidity area, you'll need to take extra precautions against corrosion.

Flood and water can quickly ruin guns and ammo. Before you build an elaborate underground vault or decide to bury your guns in a remote area, be sure you know where the water table is, what happens to surface water in the area during floods, the effects of the spring runoff and thaw.

Your local building authority can tell you where to find floodplain maps and information on water risks, and state geological surveys will provide you with groundwater information of a general nature.

I recommend every prudent precaution in dealing with environmental risks.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

You'll need to personally analyze any threat from local, state and federal agencies. This will vary with geography. If you live in a small town in Wyoming, for instance, you probably don't have to worry about the local authorities grabbing your guns, as they likely view themselves as on the side of an honest, armed citizenry. If you live in Los Angeles or New York City, it can be another story.

You may face conflicting federal, state and local laws, and local ordinances and police attitudes may even vary from town to town in the same metropolitan area.

Your local NRA representative is the best source of accurate information on the maze of gun laws on the books, and NRA members are regularly updated on changes or additions to those laws. Remember that ignorance of the law is not a legal defense, and most gun laws provide for, at minimum, confiscation of the "illegal" weapon. A lot of honest citizens have lost guns through violations of laws they had no idea existed.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Understanding gun laws is only the first step in assessing the governmental threat you face. You also need to understand the attitudes and capabilities of the pertinent agencies. A lot of individual cops don't have much use for gun laws aimed at disarming citizens, and you'll find more than a few BATF agents who feel the same way. And those who *don't* think we should own guns aren't in a hurry to knock on our doors and ask us to turn them in. The lack of a politically reliable enforcement mechanism is one of the biggest hurdles facing the Kennedy-Metzenbaum-Brady bunch in their drive to disarm us.

Both BATF and the FBI have enforcement powers for federal gun laws, but the FBI isn't enthusiastic about a heavy involvement. They have their hands full putting away real criminals. And the bureau is highly, and justifiably, respected by most Americans. It doesn't want to jeopardize that respect by going after honest citizens suddenly turned into criminals by self-serving and misguided politicians. If you're worried about the FBI, then you're probably into things other than just gun collecting or personal defense. On the other hand, things can change, so you probably don't want to send them a list of your guns.

The BATF is worth more concern, since firearms are one of its statutory areas of responsibility. BATF's real strength lies in its ability to track paper — and computer records. Think about all the Form 4473s you've probably filled out since passage of the Gun Control Act

of 1968, which requires licensed firearms dealers to keep those forms forever. Ever pawn one of your guns? You filled out another 4473, creating two records on the same firearm. Ever sold one of your guns to a private party, without a notarized record of the transaction? You probably still own the gun, as far as BATF is concerned, and if that gun is ever recovered during a criminal investigation, BATF will want to talk to you.

All of this paper is becoming a serious concern because of the increasingly powerful data-processing capacity of the federal government. Think again about those 4473s. Was your address correct on all of them? If not, you may own that gun illegally.

An individual's risk of harassment from federal agencies depends largely on the amount of paper they have on him — fill out enough forms, and you'll eventually make a mistake or give someone an excuse to take a closer look at you. If you've been audited by the IRS, worked for the federal government, filled out a lot of 4473s, applied for an FFL, belonged to the armed forces, been investigated or come to the attention of the feds in any number of routine ways, you are higher profile to them than a guy who has never filled out federal forms other than 1040s.

STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

You need to very carefully assess the attitudes of authorities in your area and neighboring regions you may need to travel through. If you have a friend on your local police force, he will be your best source of information. Official inquiries may not be answered truthfully. Talk, off the record, to your NRA rep and gun store owners, as well as other gun owners. Check local newspaper files for stories involving gun owners. Keep your eyes and ears open. And try not to come off as paranoid, but rather as a concerned citizen who doesn't want to step afoul of the law.

CHILDREN AND NEIGHBORS

OK, maybe you're not worried that your kids or neighborhood children are going to actually steal your weapons. But children are curious. A child who merely wants to show off his dad's guns to friends is a safety and security threat, since kids talk. Also, precautions against environmental risks may be negated by children handling your weapons.

Neighbors can be an asset or liability depending on how they view you and their attitudes toward guns. A liberal neighbor who views any gun owner as a "gun nut" is a liability. Given the changing attitudes of the general public toward gun ownership, you're better off treating the weapons you own as private business.

THREAT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

This following worksheet will give you a rough but objective idea of what your weapons security concerns should be. If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, you may face an elevated risk in that category.

CRIME

1. Do you live within 30 miles of a major urban area? 2. Are hard drugs (cocaine, amphetamines, heroin, etc.) a serious problem in your area? 3. Has a home in your immediate neighborhood been broken into or robbed within the past six months? 4. Are youth gangs active in your area? 5. Has a car parked in your neighborhood been broken into within the last six months? 6. Does your area have stringent gun laws, such as handgun bans? 7. Does a state or municipality bordering yours have stringent gun laws? 8. Is there a major highway or an interstate interchange within 10 miles of your home? 9. Are the jails in your area considered overcrowded by law enforcement or court officers? 10. Has your area experienced violent incidents involving racial or minority groups or "hate" crimes within the past year?

ENVIRONMENT

1. Do you live in a humid or maritime climatic zone? 2. Will you store or cache your weapons either outside or underground? 3. If you will store weapons outside, will they be subjected to freezing or extremely high temperatures? 4. Is there a flood threat in your area? 5. Will you store your weapons for longer than six months without inspection or maintenance?

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

1. Have you ever been charged with violation of a weapons law? 2. Have you ever been denied permission to purchase a weapon by a law enforcement agency? 3. Do any of your local law enforcement officials or agencies advocate new restrictions on civilian gun ownership? 4. Do you live in an area with stringent gun laws? 5. Have you ever been investigated by any federal agency?

CACHE-SITE SELECTION

There are many variables in choosing a cache site. If you've done a good threat assessment, you should know whether secure storage in your own house will work or if caching in a remote location is more appropriate. Keep in mind the tradeoffs between security on the one hand and accessibility on the other. If you're choosing a remote site, be sure you're not creating unnecessary environmental risks to your weapons.

RESIDENTIAL SITES

If your situation favors a cache site in or near your residence, try to locate it so that no unusual activity is necessary — or at least observable — to access your weapons. For instance, digging holes at night in your backyard gets noticed, while walling off a section of the basement can be done with no one knowing. If you ever build a new home, plan a few hide sites into it from the beginning.

For apartment or townhouse dwellers, an adequate indoor hide site will probably be more difficult to create. False back walls in closets can create plenty of space for long gun storage, and handguns can be cached in any number of small hide sites — false compartments in bookcases and cabinets, furniture, etc. The key here is to hide or disguise the site adequately to defeat a casual burglar. A determined law enforcement search will involve the virtual destruction or dismantling of the residence, and you can't defend against that.

The principal environmental risk to weapons cached in your residence is fire. Guns walled up in a closet are going to be hard to extract quickly. Ammunition should always be stored in a fire resistant container for this reason, but a true fire-proof container large enough for long guns is expensive. Condensation may be a problem with fireproof containers, but this can be controlled with desiccants such as silica gel or dehumidifiers in the case of larger vaults.

A homeowner willing to spend some serious money can build a fireproof vault. This should be constructed in a basement or on the ground floor of a slab foundation building. Construction requirements for such rooms are available from fire departments.

Stairways are often used to hide cache sites, and can protect against burglary. Stairwells may even provide room to hide a large gun safe. Hidden compartments in walls may also be constructed. (Drawings from *The Big Book of Secret Hiding Places*, by Jack Luger, 1987. Available from Loompanics Unlimited, P.O. Box 1197, Port Townsend, Washington, 98368. \$17.96 postpaid. Illustration courtesy of Loompanics.)

MINI-STORAGE FACILITIES

For the urban or suburban dweller who, for environmental, high crime risk, concern with government intrusion or other reasons decides that residential storage is not adequate or desirable, there are options other than burying his guns in the woods. Mini-storage warehouses are common, and those constructed of steel sheeting with a steel sliding door are a pretty secure unit.

Lots of people use them, and no one can tell what's inside. Most are used to store junk that people don't quite want to throw away, so crooks don't often break into them. They make good places to store guns — dry, fireproof, reasonably accessible yet secure from household burglars. If your guns are further secured by being locked in a strong container, you're looking at excellent security.

Some of these facilities are accessible 24 hours a day, and others close their gates at night. The better ones have some type of entry control to keep persons out that don't rent a unit, or simply haven't paid their bill. Some are patrolled by security guards. Unless you really need to access your cache at night, the greater security against theft provided by a facility closed at night makes sense. Make sure the facility will let you put your own lock on the door, and use a good one that will defeat bolt cutters.

REMOTE CACHE SITES

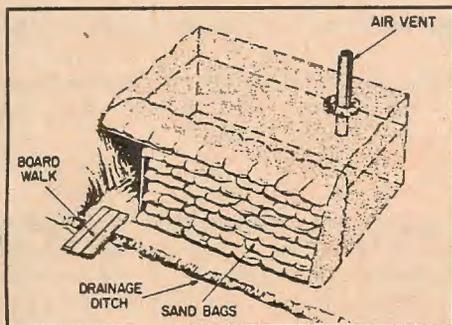
Maybe you want to get your guns completely away from an urban environment. Choosing a remote cache site requires reasonable access, since you'll probably want to be able to drive close by without attracting attention. Some locations in the national forests and on BLM land are accessible, yet remote and untraveled — until hunting season, when they may look like a four-wheeler rally. Think about how your site will look during each season, and how access will be affected.

Make sure you can find the site again. Are there some permanent, recognizable landmarks you can reference? You don't want to pace the distance to your cache carefully at, say, 220 degrees magnetic from a big, ugly tree, only to come back and find that someone has logged it out of existence. You also have to look carefully at environmental risks. Choosing a remote cache site isn't as easy as it first appears, as was covered in detail last month.

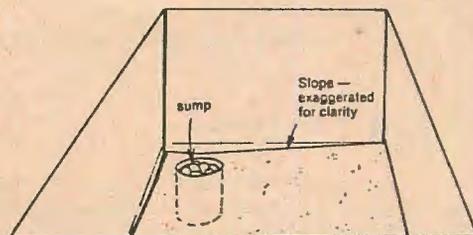
BUNKERS

For persons living in remote areas, a weapons and ammunition bunker may be a desirable cache site. "Cut and cover" type bunkers constructed in a hillside is recommended by U.S. Army combat engineers, as it provides good protection and is fairly simple to build and camouflage. Underground bunkers should be avoided, as they are difficult to keep dry.





Underground caches must be carefully planned to prevent water damage. A concrete-lined cache should include a sump. Vault should also be surrounded with perforated, gravel-filled PVC pipes, draining to lower point. Outside of walls should be protected by waterproof coating. Drawing from *Big Book of Secret Hiding Places*, by Jack Luger. Courtesy Loompanics Unlimited



Cutaway drawing (above left) shows method of emplacing bunkers in hillside or roadcut. Sandbag walls are generally used by the military, but a drier and more permanent bunker can be constructed with concrete or cinder blocks. Pressure-treated plywood-and-timber construction is sometimes used. Use heavy construction plastic on outside of buried walls for waterproofing. A gravel-filled U-shaped PVC drain pipe, perforated and surrounding the bunker, will reduce threat of groundwater intrusion. This pipe should slope slightly downhill and drain to the front. (Drawings from FM 5-15, Field Fortifications, U.S. Army.)

LENGTH OF STORAGE

The length of time you are planning to cache your guns without care or inspection will determine what steps to take in planning the cache and preparing your guns. Let's divide the choices, for the sake of discussion, into short-term (30 days or fewer), intermediate (up to six months), and long-term storage (possibly for years).

SHORT-TERM STORAGE

Short periods of storage are the best choice for avoiding environmental risks. If you can pull your guns out every month or so to inspect for rust and moisture, clean them and renew their preservatives, you'll avoid the uncertainty of wondering if your guns are OK or, worse, pulling them out of a cache only to find them rusted.

The downside of short-term storage is that your cache may be more vulnerable to criminals or government agents. If the cache is remote, you may be noticed making frequent visits. Thus, a short-term cache site should be located so that a reasonably normal routine allows access. A weapons vault in your home, for instance, would be appropriate for short-term storage.

INTERMEDIATE-TERM STORAGE

This is probably the most common scenario for traditional caches. Storage of weapons for up to six months means that you face a significant corrosion risk if they are not properly prepared, packaged and emplaced. However, a six-month cache means that you don't have to plan for several different seasons, making outdoor caching a reasonable choice.

If you own a summer vacation cabin, ski chalet or hunting lodge, you may be interested in keeping some of your guns in or near the cabin for use during visits. If no one but you or your family will use the cabin, an indoor hidden storage will reduce environmental risks and simplify emplacement and recovery. Keep in mind that remote cabins are often broken into, though. If you don't have a secure hide site in the structure, then a nearby outdoor cache may be a better choice.

LONG-TERM STORAGE

Long-term weapons storage gets pretty involved. An outdoor site will usually be the choice, since a building may change ownership, burn down, or get plowed under to make room for a shopping mall during the period the cache is in place.

Abandoned mine shafts are sometimes used, but they are usually a bad choice because of moisture and cave-ins; also, others may be aware of them. Natural caves, though less likely to cave in, also have moisture problems.

A long-term cache site, if properly chosen, will provide excellent security for your weapons, but such storage requires considerable care in preparation and carries unavoidable environmental risks.

CACHING METHODS

Traditional caching methods include concealment, burial and submersion. Special Forces doctrine is limited to these methods. For civilian purposes, we will also consider weapons safes, vaults, mobile caches and bunkers.

GUN-STORAGE CHECK LIST

Before hiding or storing a gun, certain precautions must be taken. Some of these are obvious, but some are often overlooked.

1. Unload the firearm and *visually inspect the chamber*. Unload all magazines.
2. Disassemble or field strip as necessary. Don't take apart subassemblies that are intended for factory disassembly only.
3. Clean and thoroughly dry the weapon. Refer to the U.S. Army Special Forces caching manual, published in the October 1991 SOF, for detailed procedures.
4. Coat all external and internal surfaces with a preservative appropriate to that particular material (be it steel, aluminum, wood or plastic).
5. Properly package all components, packing with appropriate desiccant material. (See SF caching manual, cited above).

6. If special tools are necessary for reassembly, pack them with the weapon. Include operator manuals if available, wrapped in plastic to protect them from metal preservatives.

7. Pack any cleaning materials and lubricants necessary to restore the weapon to operational status. Make sure solvent containers are airtight.

BURIAL CACHING

This is the method that most often comes to mind when people are thinking about hiding guns, and while a burial cache can provide excellent security, it's difficult to emplace and recover. Burial caching requires the greatest degree of care in preparation and packaging of weapons, since buried packages are subject to attack by moisture, the freeze/dry cycle (which may destroy apparently solid containers), burrowing animals, the heat of a forest fire and inadvertent discovery.

Burial sites may either be remote or located on your residential property, but discretion is advised in either case. The last thing you want is a police SWAT team kicking your door in because a hysterical neighbor told them you've buried your wife in the back yard. You may want to consider purchasing a storage shed or outbuilding kit and then digging a storage vault under it. You can also access a vault from a basement. Remember that the deeper you go, the greater the risk from groundwater.

SUBMERSION

Submersion may work well for you if you live in an area with a lot of lakes, wetlands and slow-moving streams and rivers. The underwater cache needs to be well-anchored to a solid point on shore. Avoid man-made structures such as bridges and piers if possible, since these are subject to inspection and maintenance. A submerged cache can be emplaced and recovered quickly, particularly if you have a winch-equipped vehicle.

For maximum security, the on-shore portion of the cable securing the submerged cache should be buried. If you are a diver, consider underwater burial for ultimate security. Stainless steel burial containers, well-sealed, should be used for any submerged cache. An inner waterproof packaging is desirable. Avoid streams that change course during floods.

CONCEALMENT

There are two ways to conceal a cache: either hide it or disguise it. Hidden caches involve false floors, sliding panels and the like, while disguised caches involve securing the cache in some sort of everyday object — an outdoor propane tank that isn't really a propane tank, or other "Trojan Horse" strategies.

MOBILE CACHES

A mobile cache is advised for someone who is on the move and who may need to transport weapons discretely. False floors in vehicles may conceal handguns or perhaps a long gun. Pickup beds may allow guns to be hidden underneath, and a pickup can be fitted with auxiliary gas tanks that aren't really tanks.

A camping trailer parked by a suburban garage doesn't attract a second glance, but it can contain a secure container holding a sizable cache of weapons. If you need to get out of Dodge, just hook it up and go.

SAFES AND VAULTS

Safes make sense for the citizen who is mostly concerned about crime risk. A good — and only a good — weapons safe offers protection against all but the most serious and talented criminals, and it may also protect against fire damage. Look for one with a locking mechanism that securely pins the door on all four sides. Any gun owner living in or near a major metropolitan area should seriously consider purchasing an adequate weapons safe.

Safes are expensive, but there are some ways to beat their high cost. Government agencies dispose of old safes through property disposal auctions, and these may be a good deal. Purchasing a vault door alone and installing it in a reinforced concrete chamber is cheaper than buying a huge safe, especially if you can do the concrete work yourself. The concrete walls should be laced with vertical and horizontal rebar, wired firmly together where they cross.

If government agents are your main worry, a standard gun safe alone probably isn't the answer. A well-hidden floor safe may work, though. If you park a washing machine over it or cover the entire floor with wall-to-wall carpet, you may defeat a cursory search. However, you should do all of this sort of work yourself rather than hiring it out. Floor safes, if not properly sealed, may leak.

If you plan on long-term storage in a safe, particularly a fireproof one, wrap the guns individually and pack with desiccant. Rust due to condensation can be a problem with airtight containers.

WEAPONS SAFES

A good gun safe is essential to residential weapons security. Cleverly hidden, it can provide an excellent cache site. Look for a well-made cabinet with a locking mechanism incorporating multiple steel rods or bars to secure the door. Quality safes are available from:

NATIONAL SECURITY SAFE COMPANY, 812 Dawn, Ft. Collins, CO 80524; (800) 544-3829

SUN WELDING SAFE COMPANY, 290 East Street, Simi Valley, CA 93065; (805) 584-6678

BUNKERS

While a traditional military-style bunker will attract attention in most suburbs, a bunker needn't look like a World War II ammo storage point. If you have a home on a hillside, for example, a bunker can be accessed from inside the home. A bunker entrance can also be disguised as a storage shed or a root or wine cellar. But don't bother trying to disguise it if you have kids — the word will get out.

Concrete or cinder blocks alone are not adequate, but if you tie them together with rebar and fill the voids with concrete, they will be

almost as good as reinforced concrete. You'll also want to install a strong plastic vapor barrier if the vault is underground or attached to your basement. If you don't know concrete construction, read up on it or consult a good contractor. But for complete security, you'll want to do it yourself.

DEFENSIVE MEASURES

ALARMS

A good alarm system will help secure a safe or other gun cache at home, and alarms are common enough that installing one won't raise eyebrows in most neighborhoods. The main choice is between alarming the entire residence — a fairly costly process if it's done right — or just alarming the cache site itself. If you don't face a big crime risk where you live, the latter option may be adequate.

BOOBY TRAPS

We strongly advise against use of explosive booby traps, tripwire guns, electrocution devices, etc. They are illegal in most municipalities, and may misfire anyway. If you get nailed on manslaughter charges and have to pay hefty reparations to some punk's surviving relatives, it's just not worth it. Limit any boobytrapping to non-lethal tear gas or Mace.

DECEPTION

You should strive to maintain a low profile. "Insured by Smith & Wesson" signs may convey a message, but they also advertise that you own guns. Greenpeace decals, Save the Whales stickers and campaign signs for gun grabbers will create the best image.

Another type of deception measure is a decoy gun, poorly hidden, that might satisfy a crook before he finds your good guns. Ideally, this decoy would be rigged so that it cannot be fired.

COUNTER-DETECTION MEASURES

If you are primarily concerned with government agencies, you need to consider defeating a thorough search. Buried caches may, for example, be detected by metal and mass anomaly detectors. Burying chunks of reinforced concrete all around the area will reduce the likelihood of your cache being detected. After the Feds dig up a half-dozen 50-pound blocks of apparent construction junk, they'll probably give up unless they know for sure that you have guns buried.

Locating the cache under a dog run or compost heap will also reduce risk of detection by making it unpleasant to search there. Shrubbery, landscaping and rock gardens all will reduce likelihood of detection.

LUBRICANTS AND PRESERVATIVES

Selection of the proper preservative becomes increasingly critical the longer you plan on your guns being cached. Petroleum-based lubricants and preservatives may deteriorate over time or may attack sensitive components such as plastics. Few multipurpose products perform as well as specialized products, and the terms "lubricant" and "preservative" are not synonymous.

SPECIALIZED PRODUCTS

Lubricants contain solvents necessary to ensure proper coating of operating surfaces, but solvents are highly volatile. Preservatives specifically engineered for long-term protection against corrosion contain less solvent and thus are more durable. Some of these products are sprayed on and result in a difficult-to-remove waxy coating (LPS-3, for example). Others leave a dense, grease-like coating that will be stable over a long term (such as Superlube aerosol).

Specialized preservatives should be used for long-term storage in a carefully packaged cache. They should also be used for a hasty cache planned for short-term storage, since careful packaging may not be possible. Guns coated with these products will require cleaning before firing, particularly their bores.

Silicone-based or synthetic hydrocarbon products should be used with weapons containing plastic parts. Read labels carefully; a statement to the effect that the product is safe for use with plastics will be found on the better products.

Avoid motor oils and automotive products, as they contain very specialized additives such as detergents that may work great in a hot engine, but can attack the finish of some weapons.

Even stainless steel weapons need to be protected against corrosion. Some of the best products are:

T9 BOESHIELD, a product developed by Boeing for aerospace applications. Aerosol leaves durable, waxy film; recommended for marine use. PMS Products, Inc., 285 James St., Holland, MI 49424

SUPER LUBE, a synthetic grease available in tubes or as an aerosol, effective in marine applications. Will not degrade plastics, according to manufacturer. Syncho Chemical Corp., 24 DaVinci Dr., Bohemia, NY 11716

LPS-3, an aerosol product that leaves a long-lasting, waxy coating. Claimed to provide up to two years protection against corrosion. LPS Laboratories, 4647 Hugh Howell Rd., Tucker, GA 30085

LUBRIPLATE MARINE GUARD, an aerosol designed for corrosion protection in salt-water environments. Fiske Brothers Refining Company, Newark, NJ 07105

METAL SEAL, specifically designed for firearms protection by the makers of the well-known Outers product line. Omark Industries, Onalaska, WI 54605

SHEATH RUST PREVENTATIVE, another firearms-specific product from an experienced manufacturer of gun care products. Birchwood-Casey, Eder Prairie, MN 55344

HCF, a multipurpose aerosol product emphasizing corrosion protection. BG Products, Wichita, KS 67213

DISASSEMBLY CONSIDERATIONS

It's a good idea to separate wood, metal and plastic components, as they have different preservative requirements. This will also assure you that no corrosion is hidden by the stock, handguards or other furniture. Disassembly may also extend the service life of springs. Just make sure that you can reassemble anything you take apart. Some modern firearms include subassemblies that really aren't designed to be taken apart.

CARING FOR WOOD

Wood stocks need to be cleaned of gun oils and coated with a good wood preservative compatible with the finish. For oiled stocks, this will probably mean tung or linseed oil. In the case of varnished stocks, you may want to apply a fresh coat of good varnish. Matte finish polyurethane synthetic varnishes work well, but traditional spar varnish will certainly do.

If the finish is good, nothing more than a coat of furniture wax may be needed. After the finish or wax is dry, the stock should be wrapped in a clean, dry cloth.

PLASTICS AND POLYMERS

Plastic components are generally durable and corrosion resistant, but oxidation can be a problem. Light silicone greases or waxes are a good choice for preserving them, but test any such product overnight on a hidden or inner surface to make sure it won't attack the finish. Armor All-type products may cloud or discolor some plastics, for example. When possible, separation of plastic components will allow more careful protection of both the plastic and metal portions of the weapon.

In the case of a Glock or similar weapon that uses plastic for the receiver or other major portion of the gun, complete disassembly is neither practical nor advised. Choose a synthetic-based preservative that is certified safe for plastics, test it on a non-critical spot, and then coat the entire assembly. Aerosol sprays will coat hard-to-reach surfaces.

Heat is the Achilles heel of plastic guns, so a flame- and heat-resistant container is advised.

SPRING TENSION

Loss of tension or fatigue in compressed springs is a frequent concern, and while modern springs are resistant to deterioration, there is no reason to ask for trouble by storing weapons with unnecessarily compressed springs. Magazines should certainly not be stored loaded, and actions should be relaxed. Basic field stripping will usually relieve tension on recoil springs, which won't hurt anything if long-term storage is planned. If you have a weapon you know to have a spring problem, consider storing it with spares of the necessary components.

Springs are very smooth, so light oils may not be retained well. Apply a thick coat of grease prior to storage, or pack springs in a grease-filled container. A subassembly such as a trigger group with critical springs will be well-protected simply by packing with a high-quality grease.

CONTAINERS

A number of firms manufacture containers specifically designed as caching containers. Stainless steel and PVC pipe are generally utilized for burial, though galvanized steel would also be a good material. Steel containers should be protected by a heavy coat of paint as well. An epoxy paint would be a good choice.

Field-expedient containers can be constructed from construction-grade PVC tubing. Schedule 40 PVC has a wall thickness of 0.365 inch and is adequate for burial purposes. It's generally sold in 20-foot lengths for about \$150, and end caps cost about \$85 each. Assuming containers 4 feet in length, five could be constructed for about \$1000, or \$200 each. Two rifles or shotguns, accessories, ammunition and handguns could be stored in such a container, so this is not an unreasonable price.

A less-costly approach is to wrap the weapons in multiple layers of heavy-duty construction plastic ("Visqueen"), overlapping the ends and wrapping with polyethylene tape or duct tape. If the weapons are then packed in a sturdy wooden crate or equivalent container, this will work for burial in a dry environment. But it isn't as stable as PVC or steel.

Before packaging, weapons must be properly prepared as discussed last month. Remember to pack with a suitable desiccant. Silica gel is recommended by the Army, but at about \$30 per pound it's fairly expensive. "Dririte" is a calcium sulfate desiccant that may be dried and reused, and it only costs about \$10 per pound. Scientific supply companies sell these products for use in drying samples for lab analysis and for packing instruments and electronic equipment.

BOOKS ON CACHING AND HIDING

Need more information? First, be certain you have a copy of *CACHING*, TC 31-29A, by the U.S. Army Special Forces. It covers all aspects of secure weapons caching, especially proper packaging procedures and was reprinted in the October 1991 SOF. (Available for \$5 from SOF Back Issues, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, or by calling (303) 449-3750. Fax orders with credit card information to (303) 444-5617.)

Also useful are the following books, available from Paladin Press, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306, or by calling 1-800-392-2400:

Modern Weapons Caching, by Ragnar Benson (\$14)

How to Hide Anything, by Michael Conner (\$10)

The Construction of Secret Hiding Places, by Charles Robinson (\$9)

ChinaSports



Type 54-1 TOKAREV

CALIBERS: .38 Super, or 7.62x25 mm
ACTION: SemiAuto, Spl
LENGTH: 7.7 inches
BARREL: 4.5 inches
WEIGHT: 29 oz.
MAGAZINE: 8 Rds.
SIGHTS: Fixed



Change caliber just by switching barrel and recoil spring. Kit available for those who already own a Tokarev.

TYPE 77B

CALIBER: 9x19 mm
ACTION: Single
LENGTH: 7.5 inches
BARREL: 5 inches
WEIGHT: 34 oz.
MAGAZINE: 8 Rds.
SIGHTS: Adj, rear



One hand cocking. Gas recoil for performance with different loads, dirt, weather.

Powerful. Compact. Proven.

TYPE 59 MAKAROV

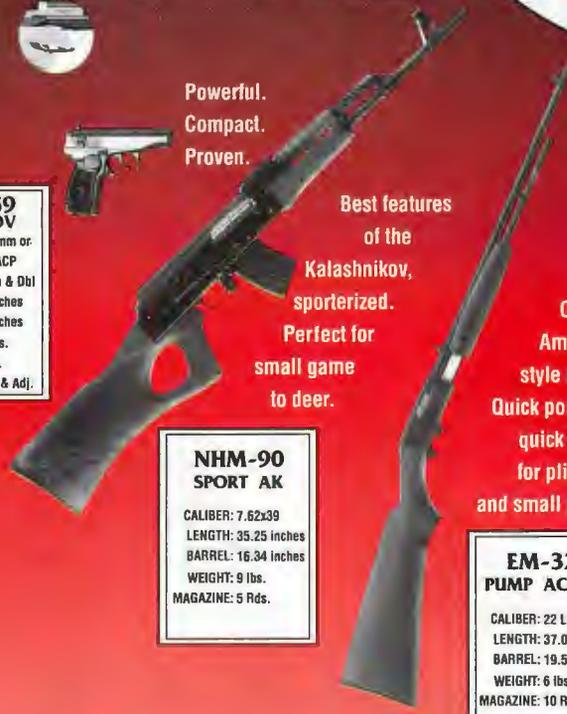
CALIBER: 9x18 mm or .380 ACP
ACTION: Single & Dbl
LENGTH: 6.3 inches
BARREL: 3.5 inches
WEIGHT: 1.5 lbs.
MAGAZINE: 8 Rds.
SIGHTS: Fixed & Adj.



Best features of the Kalashnikov, sporterized. Perfect for small game to deer.

NHM-90 SPORT AK

CALIBER: 7.62x39
LENGTH: 35.25 inches
BARREL: 16.34 inches
WEIGHT: 9 lbs.
MAGAZINE: 5 Rds.



EM-321 PUMP ACTION

CALIBER: .22 Long Rifle
LENGTH: 37.0 inches
BARREL: 19.5 inches
WEIGHT: 6 lbs.
MAGAZINE: 10 Rds.

Classic American style pump. Quick pointing, quick firing, for plinking, and small game.

EM-332 BOLT ACTION

CALIBER: .22 Long Rifle
LENGTH: 41.5 inches
BARREL: 18.5 inches
WEIGHT: 4.5 lbs.
MAGAZINE: 5 Rds.

Lines of the larger caliber rifles plus unique double mag holder in stock.



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45

.45 ACP
TYPE: 45 ACP
BULLET: 230 gr FMJ copper jacket lead core
CASE: Brass reloadable
PRIMER: Boxer noncorrosive
VELOCITY: 830 FPS
MUZZLE ENERGY: 326 F.P.
PACKAGING: 50 Rds/box
1000 Rds/case

The classic 45 ammo. Priced right for target and sport shooting. Powerful defense.

ChinaSports

9

9 Para
TYPE: 9x19mm Luger
BULLET: 124 gr FMJ copper jacket lead core
CASE: Brass reloadable
PRIMER: Boxer noncorrosive
VELOCITY: 1130 FPS
MUZZLE ENERGY: 426 F.P.
PACKAGING: 50 Rds/box
2000 Rds/case

Accurate, high velocity ammo for targets, defense, and small game.

ChinaSports

7.62x39

7.62x39
TYPE: 7.62x39mm Russian
BULLET: 122 gr FMJ copper jacket lead core
CASE: Steel nonreloadable
PRIMER: Boxer noncorrosive
VELOCITY: 2350 FPS
MUZZLE ENERGY: 1485 F.P.
PACKAGING: 20 Rds/box
1200 Rds/case

Growing popular in U.S. with collectors, small game hunters. New ammo.

ChinaSports

.223

.223
TYPE: 223 Remington
BULLET: 55gr FMJ copper jacket lead core
CASE: Brass reloadable
PRIMER: Boxer noncorrosive
VELOCITY: 3250 FPS
MUZZLE ENERGY: 1375 F.P.
PACKAGING: 20 Rds/box
1600 Rds/case

Dependable in semi and full auto, bolt, and single shot rifles of 5.56 or .223

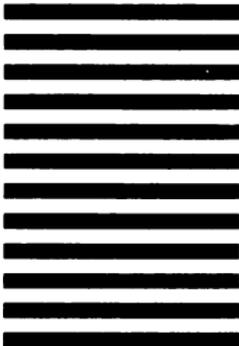




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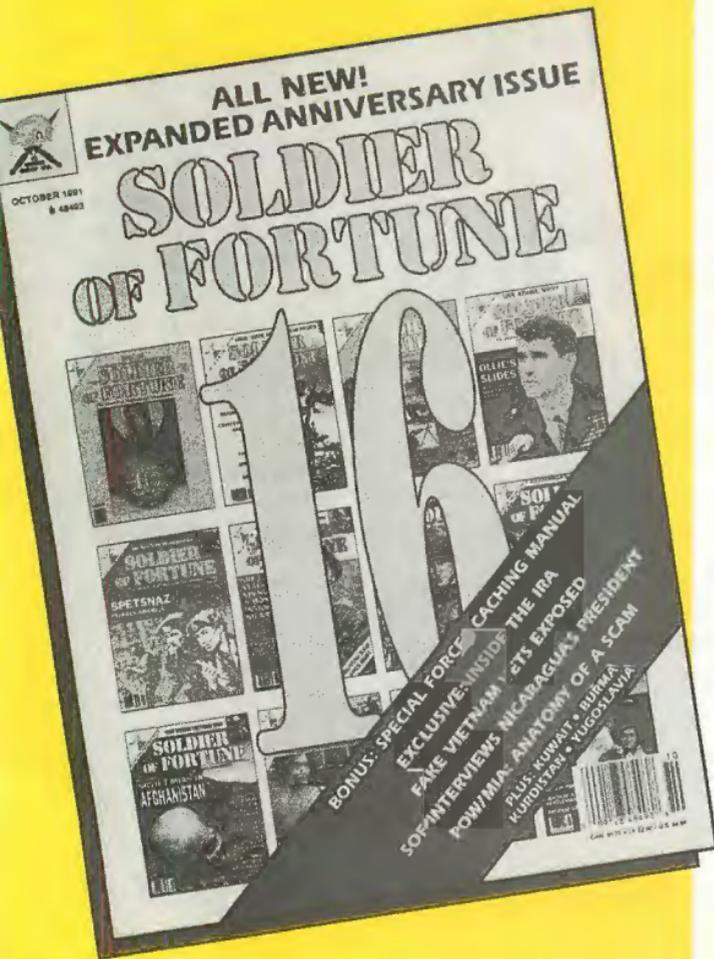
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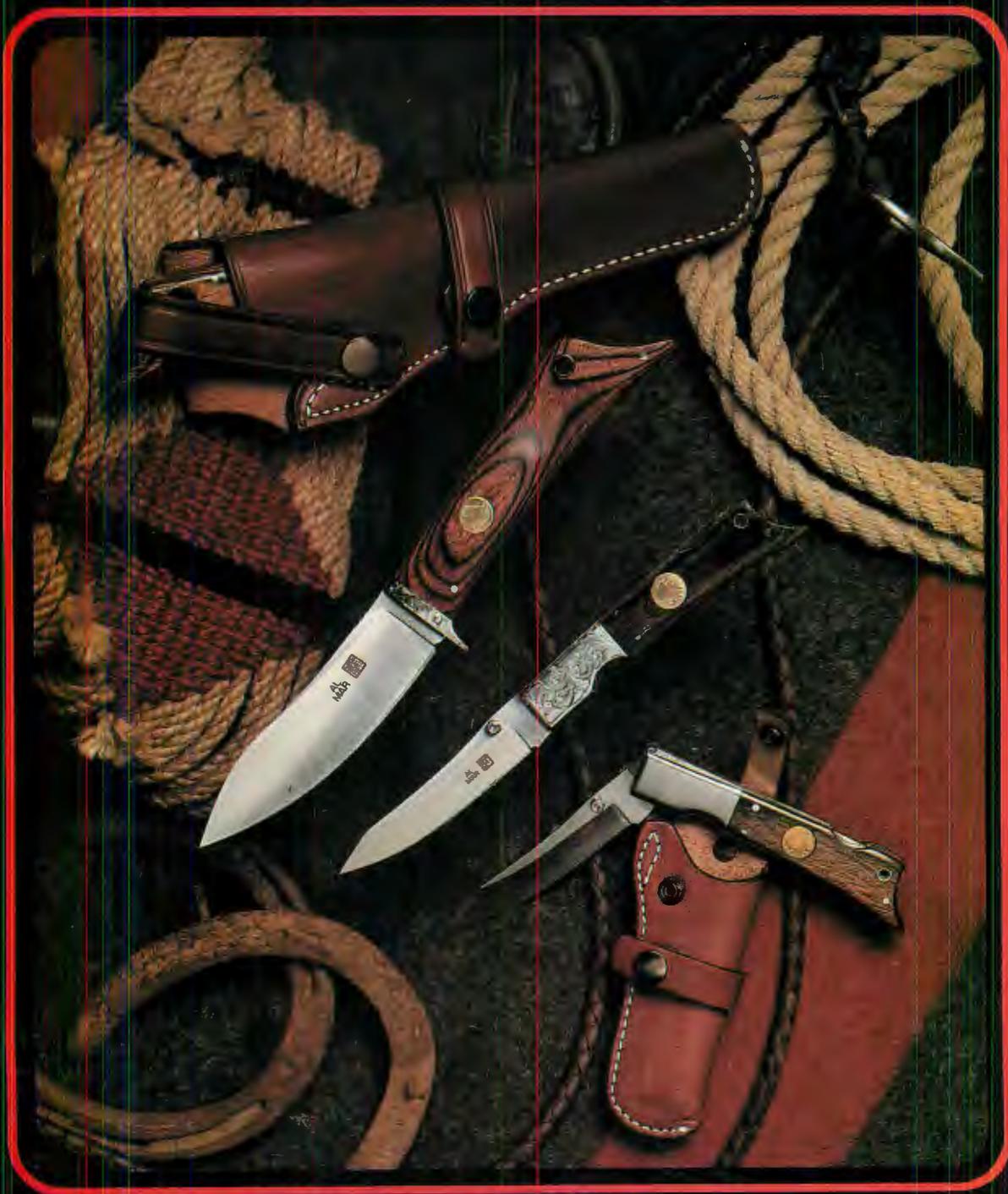
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